'A bikini bug ate me alive': What happened when this woman left her swimwear to dry in the sun

dailymail.co.uk

Saturday, Dec 6th 2014

By Alexandra Heminsley

Updated: 04:36 EST, 16 June 2009

Two years ago, after a soggy British summer, a friend suggested a last-minute break for some winter sun. I'd just signed my first book deal and leapt at the chance. We chose Kenya. It was affordable, it was sunny, and it didn't involve anything remotely like hard work.

We had a wonderful time: afternoons spent reading by the pool, a couple of days on safari and a boat trip for some snorkelling.

Holiday nightmare: Alexandra Heminsley had a fantastic time abroad - until she was bitten by a female African tumbu fly

Ever the holiday geek, I was careful throughout: I had all the requisite jabs, spent a small fortune on anti-malarial pills and was almost constantly doused in half a can of mosquito repellent. I even wore an old T-shirt while snorkelling to make sure my back did not get burned.

The trip was a great success, and as I took the taxi to the airport I was pleased to see that I had only one mosquito bite. It was on the inside of my left upper arm, by the seam of my T-shirt. Never mind, I thought, it's not even itchy: it will be kept cool in the plane's air conditioning and will be almost gone by the time I'm back.

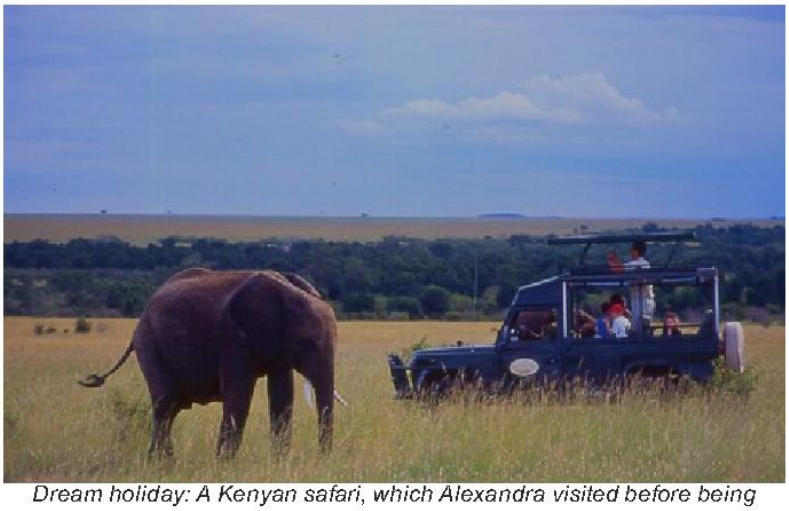
The reality was somewhat different. Within a few hours of arriving home, I was being violently sick.

Food poisoning or a bug from the plane, I decided. After 24 sleepless hours, I noticed that the bite was getting larger. By now, it was the size of a grain of rice. I also worried that it had become infected, because it was yellow and hard.

Two days later, I was no longer ill, but the bite was so uniquely painful that I was exhausted by it. It was relentless. It was now very raised, and very yellow. I was as repulsed as I was pained by it.

On my third night back, the pain was so intense that I was again unable to sleep. It was a sharp pain, as if someone had put a knitting needle in the freezer and was jabbing it into my arm. It was sporadic, coming in waves. Every time I thought it was abating and nearly fell asleep, it came back stronger than before.

At about 4am, I had turned the light on and was staring at the bite. Suddenly, it seemed to be moving. I must be very, very tired, I reasoned.



Dream holiday: A Kenyan safari, which Alexandra visited before being bitten

There was now a hole at the top of the bite, with what looked like pus; I wiped it clean with a piece of disinfected cotton wool. The pain abated. Twenty minutes later, more movement, more yellow stuff, more agony.

The next morning, I headed to a meeting in North London.

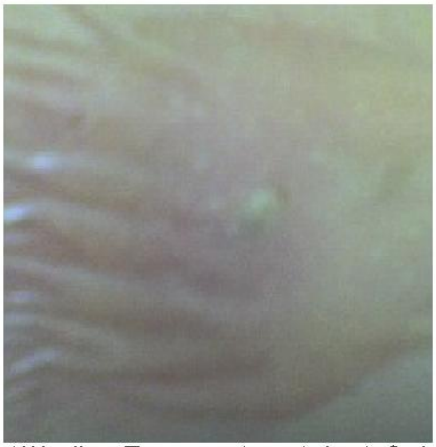
This time, I was in so much pain I was doing short, shallow breaths through my mouth and could barely stand on the train. Other passengers must have thought I was having contractions.

As the train passed the stop for Hampstead, very close to the Royal Free Hospital, I decided on the spur of the moment to have it dressed by a professional.

A triage nurse saw me quickly. I explained that I'd been bitten by a mosquito in Kenya, and it now seemed infected. I tried to add nonchalantly that I thought the area was wriggling. I didn't want to be the 'crazy lady' of the day.

I needn't have worried. As I rolled up my sleeve to show the nurse, it became immediately clear to both of us that it was not a mosquito bite. Out of the - now larger - hole popped what appeared to be a small maggot, accompanied by the now familiar wave of pain. I widened my eyes in horror.

'Please, can I lead you into this room?' she said in a very, very calm voice. She shut me into a small room with a foot-wide, securely sealed door. 'I'm getting someone to come and see you,' she mouthed from the other side.



Wriggling: The maggot was trying to find a way out of the skin

Unwelcome guest: The maggot under the

Unwelcome guest: The maggot under the skin (left) and dead (right)

I lay down on the bed in the room. I was crying with pain and now panicked by what was wriggling out of my arm. After about half an hour, a doctor from the tropical disease unit came to see

skin (left) and dead (right) me. After looking at my arm, he said he thought he knew what it was, but needed a second opinion.

An hour later, the head of department arrived. By this time, I'd had to turn the light out in the room as I was in so much pain. I'd had no sleep for three days and was in no state to meet the most devastatingly handsome doctor I had ever seen, but there he was. I was swooning with pain, but I swooned some more.

Dr Jake knew exactly what it was and confirmed it with a series of questions. Had I been in Africa? Had I worn a damp T-shirt while there? Had the 'bite' started out like a small red bump? Yes, yes and yes.

It was the larva of the tumbu fly, found anywhere in the tropics from South America and India, through to Australasia and Thailand, and I had a condition known as myiasis, when larvae live and feed on a host. It sounded disgusting. Worse still, it's relatively rare in humans.

Jake told me the female tumbu fly likes to lay its eggs on damp clothing or linen. (I remembered leaving my wet T-shirt hanging off the edge of my sunlounger to dry.) If those clothes are then worn, the eggs penetrate the skin. After two or three days, the larvae hatch beneath the skin.

Help: The Royal Free Hospital in Hampstead, where Alexandra was treated

Once 'born', the larvae need air so they eat their way out. I realised, with horror, that the pain was the larva munching its way out of my arm.

I was told that, in fact, I was one of the lucky ones, as my bug was smart enough to head out of my arm. Dr Jake - who had seen the condition while doing missionary work in Africa - explained that some burrow farther inwards by mistake, making the process of removal much more difficult.

In the tropics, he told me, it's important not to wear damp clothes that have been outside. Your clothes should be tumble-dried or, if they are left to dry outside, ironed. The intense heat kills the eggs.

The same is true for swimming costumes. Don't leave them hanging on your hotel balcony to dry in the sun while you take a nap.

The treatment was almost as grotesque as the problem. You must not gouge the larva out. It has to be lured out by suffocating it: in its search for air, it wriggles out.

The African maggot had to chew its way out of Alexandra's body

Apparently, in Africa, bacon is used. In the Royal Free, they went for Vaseline. Half a tub was slathered over the area, then a clear, airtight plastic dressing was fixed on top. 'Go shopping and come back in three hours,' I was told.

There is not much that makes me Definitely Not Feel Like Shopping, but strutting around Hampstead with an African maggot chewing its way out of my body really put me off.

When I returned to the Royal Free, a teaching hospital, a room was ready for me - as were about 25 student doctors and curious nurses. With digital cameras. And a jar. 'We're so excited!' they said. 'We never thought we'd see something like this in North London.'

Dr Jake was masterful. Tweezers at the ready, he whipped off the dressing and plucked the larva out in seconds. Everyone leaned forward, then gasped. The most intense pain I have ever known was followed by exquisite relief.

A bug around the size of a pencil nib was put in a jar, sealed and passed around. The students were mesmerised. I, however, was far more mesmerised by the clean hole in my arm. Now I understood why maggots were used to clean wounds in the past: it was immaculate.

The pain was over. No dressing was needed. I simply have a neat, perfectly round scar, the circumference of a small pea, in my arm.

I haven't been back to Africa, but I am not afraid to. I am very diligent about tumble-drying my bikinis. And I iron a lot.

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'Cannibals killed women then ate them after stuffing flesh in pasties'

mirror.co.uk

- Nov 14, 2014 09:58
- By Gareth Roberts

Brazilian trio are accused of the Sweeney Todd style crime after they are alleged to have sold the gruesome food stuff to schools and hospitals claiming they contained tuna and chicken

PA

On trial: Jorge Silveira and his wife Isabel Pires allegedly put their victims flesh in pastries

Three suspected cannibals have gone on trial charged with killing at least two women, eating their bodies and stuffing pasties with their flesh which they sold to neighbours.

A man, his wife and his mistress were arrested in April 2012 in the city of Garanhuns, Brazil.

Jorge Beltrao Negromonte da Silveira, 52, his wife Isabel Cristina Pires, 53, and mistress Bruna Cristina Oliveira da Silva, 28, who lived with the couple, allegedly lured women to their house on the pretence of a nanny job.

PA

Investigation: Police at the home of Jorge Silveira and Isabel Pires

They are also accused of putting their victims' flesh in pasties, which they sold to unsuspecting acquaintances in grisly scenes reminiscent of the film, Sweeney Todd.

Police say they confessed to their crimes before claiming to be part of a sect that wanted to reduce the world's population.

The trial started on Thursday and the trio face up to 30 years in prison.

Scene of horror: The house where the alleged cannibals lived in Garanhuns, Brazil

At the opening of the trial, Mrs Silveira called the murders "a horrible, monstrous mistake,"

PA

according to the G1 news portal.

"It was a moment of extreme weakness and brutality that I regret," she said.

Detectives found remains of two women in the back yard of the suspects' house and they are believed to have been killed between 2008 and 2012.

One of their victims is believed to be Alexandra Falcao, 20.

Daily Mirror

Alleged victim:

Alexandra Falcao, 20, is thought to have been one of the victims of the suspected cannibal killers

When they were arrested they told police their sect preached "the purification of the world and the reduction of its population".

Authorities said the trio made empanadas – a thick pasty-style dish – which they filled with the flesh of their victims that had been stored in a refrigerator.

Police say the trio – and a young child who lived with the man and wife – then ate them and sold some to neighbours, schools and hospitals claiming they contained tuna and chicken.

In the dock:Jorge Silveira (l) and his wife Isabel Pires stand accused of the grisly crimes

Detectives also found a 50-page book, Revelations Of A Schizophrenic, written by Silveira. In it, he said he heard voices and was obsessed with killing women.

He also described the death of Jessica Camila da Silva Pereira, a 17-year-old murdered in 2008, according to police.

Police were alerted to the murders when the trio attempted to use a credit card of one of their alleged victims.

Daily Mirror

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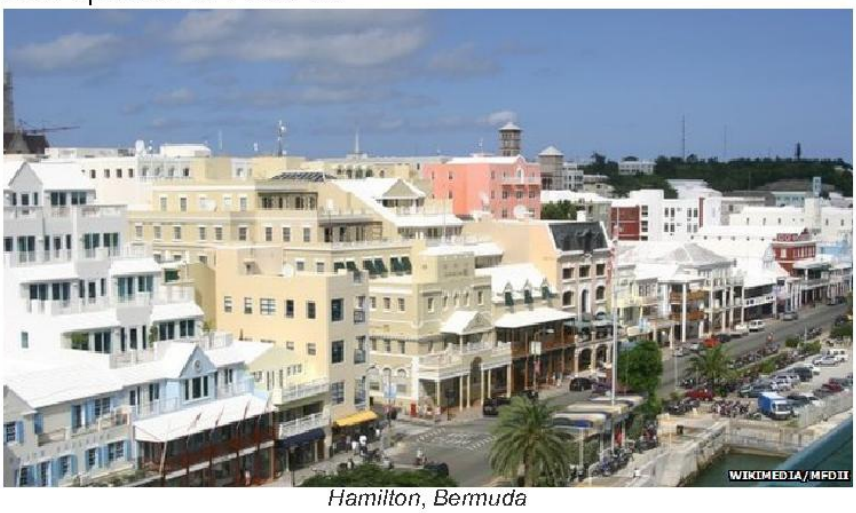
'Extinct' snail turns up in alley

27 October 2014 bbc.com

Last updated at 11:31 ET



Hamilton, Bermuda

Hamilton, Bermuda: Home to not-so-extinct snails

A snail which conservationists thought was extinct has been found living in an alley in Bermuda, it's been reported.

The species of Bermudian land snail, known as Poecilozonites bermudensis, hadn't been seen on the island for more than 40 years. But now a colony of the creatures has been found flourishing in a "damp and overgrown alleyway" in the capital city, Hamilton, by a local resident, the Royal Gazette website reports. "For it to be found in Hamilton is unbelievable. It's the last place you would imagine that a small colony of rare snails would be discovered," says Dr Mark Outerbridge of the government's Conservation Service. It's thought that by choosing a concrete home, the snails were protected from the predators that wiped out the rest of their population, Dr Outerbridge says.

London Zoo began a Bermudian land snail programme in 2004, to help protect what was thought to be the last remaining species, Poecilozonites circumfirmatus, from extinction. The Poecilozonites family was once so common in Bermuda that they were burned for limestone, according to the Bermuda Sun. In 1951, another of the island's native species, the Bermuda Petrel, was rediscovered. Until then it was thought the seabird, also known as the cahow, had become extinct in the 1600s.

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'Furry' convention disrupted as 'intentional' gas incident sends 19 to hospitals

2014-12-07 chicagotribune.com

19 Hospitalized After Chemical Leak At Rosemont Hotel Holding Furry Convention

The third alarm leak happened right in the middle of the annual Midwest Furfest Convention, forcing people to evacuate the center, in full costume.

By Alexandra Chachkevitch Geoff Ziezulewicz Chicago Tribune

The manner by which the substance was released "suggests an intentional act," according to the police.

Several thousand people, some dressed as animal characters, were evacuated from a Hyatt hotel in suburban Rosemont when an “intentional” chlorine gas incident at the hotel, which was hosting the Midwest FurFest convention, sent 19 people to hospitals early Sunday.

The incident happened around 12:40 a.m. at the Hyatt, at 9300 West Bryn Mawr Avenue in Rosemont, according to a statement from the Rosemont Public Safety Department. First responders were called to investigate a noxious odor that was spreading across the ninth floor of the hotel, where a high level of chlorine gas was discovered in the air, the statement said.

Nineteen people were transported to nearby hospitals after complaining of nausea, dizziness and other medical problems, according to the statement. All people inside the building were temporarily evacuated and sheltered at nearby facilities, including the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center.

Disrupted was an annual weekendlong convention called Midwest FurFest, which celebrates art, literature and performance based around anthropomorphic animals, draws thousands of people every year, according to the Midwest FurFest website.

Hazardous materials technicians found the source of the chlorine gas, what appeared to be powdered chlorine, in a stairwell at the ninth floor, according to a statement from police.

Technicians decontaminated the area and after conducting several tests deemed the area safe within about two hours. People were allowed back into the building about 4:20 a.m., according to a statement from FurFest. Some conventiongoers, some of whom were dressed up as animal characters, stood outside of the building. Hundreds more escaped the chilly

weather at other buildings.

"At 1:10 AM the entire hotel was evacuated, first across Bryn Mawr Ave. in front of the Hyatt as per Rosemont Fire Department's standard procedures, then when it became apparent that the wait would take longer, the Stephens Convention Center was opened to provide warmth and shelter to our guests," according to the FurFest statement.

Thomas Zell, 27, of Arlington Heights, said he was outside with a group of people near the hotel entrance when he saw people being evacuated. Zell said he has been attending FurFest and other conventions in the Hyatt hotel for several years.

"A lot of people thought this was just someone pulling the fire alarm," Zell said, adding that it is not uncommon for someone to trigger the alarm at such events. "But it was serious this time," Zell said.

Zell and others said many conventiongoers were dancing and partying in groups in different parts of the hotel when the incident happened.

Iowa residents Morgan Smejkal and Chris Delaney said they did not hear the alarms in the part of the building they were in and found out they needed to evacuate through hotel staff and after receiving texts from their friends.

"It was shocking," said Smejkal while standing outside the hotel dressed in a red panda animal suit.

The couple said they smelled chlorine as they walked out the building.

"It was like when you walk into a pool. It was pungent," said Delaney.

The manner by which the substance, which was consistent with powdered chlorine, was released "suggests an intentional act," according the statement from Rosemont police, who are investigating the incident as a criminal matter.

FurFest organizers said in the statement that neither they nor the hotel would offer refunds because the incident was "an unforeseen criminal act."

Still, organizers said in the statement late Sunday morning that the FurFest would go on.

"As we wake up today we want to continue to provide the best possible convention that we can, despite the trying circumstances," according to the statement. "We ask you to continue to be patient, and remember that the volunteers who make Midwest FurFest happen intend to give 110% to make sure that the fun, friendship, and good times of Midwest FurFest 2014 overshadow last night's unfortunate incident."

Copyright (c) 2014Chicago Tribune

'Ghost' of Michael Jackson caught on camera pacing the corridors of Neverland

By Julian Gavaghan 07:48 EST, 7 July 2009
07:48 EST, 7 July 2009

dailymail.co.uk

Everyone loves a ghost story.

But only the most one-eyed of Michael Jackson fans could see anything in the latest supposedly creepy goings-on at Neverland.

Footage from a TV crew's tour of the King Of Pop's now deserted ranch, which appeared on the respected Larry King show in the US, has been seized on by believers of the supernatural.

They are trying to persuade YouTube visitors that a shadow filmed in one of the unending hallways is actually Jacko's ghostly presence.

Scroll down to bottom to watch the video...

Thriller? A shadowy figure can be seen at the end of the hall, circled above Fright fan: Jackson showed his love of the scary in his 1983 video for Thriller

The alleged sighting is the latest in a string of bizarre rumours to emerge after his death nearly two weeks ago.

These include reports the late singer will tour the world via hologram and that he will be buried without his brain.

Neither Miko Brando - the son of screen legend Marlon - nor his cameraman noticed the spectre during their trip to the California ranch.

But after it was posted on YouTube, rumours have spread like wildfire across the internet.

Viewer comments and chat forums have debated in earnest the possibility that the shadow belongs to Jackson himself.

Jackson was a huge fan of JM Barrie's Peter Pan, the little boy who never grew up (as the name of his ranch suggests) and lost his shadow before Wendy sewed it back on.

On YouTube, one user said: 'Yes, that is MJ, even the hair style silhouette everything..!! Immortal!'

Another wrote: ‘That is so weird. I have played it over five times now and I have to admit that it does resemble MJ. I can’t believe I am saying that actually. It’s his image.’

But others were not so convinced.

‘It is the shadow of a TV crew person in the room, idiot people. Get a grip… that’s not genuine ghost footage!’ wrote tubs1000.

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'Honey Boo Boo' Star Chickadee -- Buy My Potion to Prevent Ebola tmz.com

Honey Boo Boo Anna Ebola

"Honey Boo Boo" star **Chickadee** is turning into a snake oil salesman, literally ... she's now hawking potions that claim to prevent Ebola.

Chickadee needs some pocket change in a bad way now that **"Honey Boo Boo"** has been cancelled. So she's signed up with a company called Young Living Essential Oils.

Anna now has a link on her Facebook page promoting the company's product line, which includes the Ebola-blocking oil. The FDA has warned Young Living Oils not to make the Ebola claim. The company says the oil is multi-purpose -- it can also help prevent cancer.

And this is fun ... one of the products is called Thieves.

Chickadee **got BLASTED** this weekend for asking fans on GoFundMe to donate to what is essentially her pocket change fund.

She's not as bad as Bernie Madoff ... but she's young.

1201-chickadee-anna-marie-shannon-product-SUB-01

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'Killer vampire tenant leaves man's house haunted'

2014 November 29 09:47:13 zimkasi.com

'Killer vampire tenant leaves man's house haunted'

Published: 2014 November 03 07:20:07 (890 Views)
Landlord Petros Chauke, from Esselen Park in Tembisa, Ekurhuleni, SA, has claimed that his tenant is a killer vampire who has left his house haunted.

"Neighbours heard screams coming from my house on Tuesday night, and when they got there, they found the man on top of his bleeding girlfriend," Petros said.

"People suspect he was drinking blood from her."

When the neighbours called the police, the man tried to kill himself by cutting his throat but he survived.

He's under police guard at Tembisa Hospital, and his girlfriend is dead.

"We pray to God to spare him so he can explain his actions. This is Satanic," Petros said.

"The man and his girlfriend had been living in my house for some time and they never fought. I am shocked that he did this."

Petros said he was sick and had to go to Limpopo last year.

"I asked my tenant to look after my house while I was away," he said.

"He was my close friend, and I didn't have a problem when his girlfriend moved in with him.

"When I came back to Gauteng I allowed them to stay on in my house while I moved to my girlfriend's place.

"Now I'm beginning to think I made a big mistake.

"Someone has been killed in my house. How am I going to live there now?

"I performed a cultural ritual to take the woman's spirit out of my house but she keeps on haunting me."

Petros said strange things have been happening since the woman died.

"Things just break on their own and I don't understand why," he said.
"I suspect my house is haunted."

Captain Manyadza Ralidzivha confirmed that a case of murder was opened.

Source - Dailysun

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'Monster' spotted in village pond

stuff.co.nz

LURKING BENEATH THE WATER: Could a crocodile have made its home at the bottom of a French pond - or could it be something more sinister?

A French village is on alert after several sightings of a crocodile in a local pond, with police and local anglers joining the hunt for the "Loch Ness monster of the Vosges."

Xertigny, a village of 3,000 inhabitants in the Vosges region in eastern France, has been transfixed by the unexplained sightings and sightseers have regularly gathered by the water's edge to follow the hunt.

A chicken has been left by the waterside to attract the animal, but so far it has escaped capture and local authorities are considering draining the pool.

"We have been around the pond several times and you can't really say if anything is there," said Bruno Aime, vice president of a local anglers' association, told France Info radio, after using a special sonar device to investigate.

"I think it's carp but it could also be a caiman of about 1.50 metres. The equipment doesn't let you see the difference between a pike of a metre long and a caiman of 1.50 metres," he said.

Crocodiles are found only in zoos and parks in France.

The local Est Republicain newspaper has covered the chase in a special blog that includes hour-by-hour updates (in French) and footage of the search - but the only animal it has caught on film so far is a small mammal resembling a water vole.

- Reuters

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'Pulpit in haunted church sinks to the ground'

2014 November 29 09:47:13 zimkasi.com

'Pulpit in haunted church sinks to the ground'

Published: 2014 November 05 07:48:27 (792 Views)
Pastor and prophet Matilda Motsamai from Lindelani squatter camp in Benoni, Ekurhuleni claims that her church is haunted by a ghost.

"I was reading from the Bible when it happened," she said claiming that the pulpit started sinking into the ground.

Matilda said congregants were now too afraid to come to church services because they're scared of also being swallowed by the earth.

"I heard rumours that someone was killed and buried in the church yard some years ago," Matilda said.

"I think the spot where the pulpit stood might be where the body was buried."
Matilda also started worrying about another ghost.

"One of my tenants died three years ago after his friends set his shack on fire," she said.

"Maybe that ghost is also haunting me.

"His family from Maputo came to take his remains and did rituals to take his spirit home, but I'm not sure if they did it properly."

Benoni cops were called to the church yesterday, and they brought a sniffer dog with them to search for a buried body.

But the dog found nothing. "I'm happy about that," Matilda said.

"We've been trying to complete the church building for more than a year, but it looks like there's something blocking the process.

"If there are evil spirits trying to stop my church they won't win. "I'm a prophet and I can see these things."

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'Resurrection bug' revived after 120,000 years

2009-06-15T00:01:00Z newscientist.com

A tiny bacterium has been coaxed back to life after spending 120,000 years buried three kilometres deep in the Greenland ice sheet.

Researchers who found it say it could resemble microbes that may have evolved in ice on other planets.

Officially named *Herminiimonas glaciei*, the bug consists of rods just 0.9 micrometres long and 0.4 micrometres in diameter, about 10 to 50 times smaller than the well-known bacterium, *Escherichia coli*.

"What's unique is that it's so small, and seems to survive on so few nutrients," says Jennifer Loveland-Curtze of Pennsylvania State University, whose team has described the new species.

She speculates that thanks to its tiny dimensions, it can survive in minute veins in the ice, scavenging sparse nutrients that were buried along with the ice. It also has extensive tail-like flagella to help it manoeuvre through the veins to find food.

"Along with the snow, you get dust, bacterial cells, fungal spores, plant spores, minerals and other organic debris," says Loveland-Curtze. "So we postulate that it lives in these microniches in the ice."

Coaxed back to life

Researchers in the team coaxed it back to life by keeping it at 2 °C for 7 months, then at 5 °C for a further four-and-a-half months, after which they saw colonies of very small purplish-brown bacteria.

Loveland-Curtze speculates that similar microbes may have evolved in the ice on other planets and moons, such as the ice at the poles of Mars and the ice-covered ocean on Europa, one of Jupiter's moons.

"All we can say is that because ice is the best medium to preserve nucleic acids, other organic compounds and cells, the potential for finding them in these environments is quite high because of the cold," says Loveland-Curtze. "It gives us hope that if something is there, we can locate it."

The oldest known ice on Earth yielded a bacterium that grew after 8 million years.

Journal reference: *International Journal of Systematic and Evolutionary Microbiology* (DOI: 10.1099/ijs.0.001685-0).

Jupiter's moon Europa has an icy crust made up of blocks, which are thought to have broken apart and 'rafted' into new positions (Image: NASA/JPL/University of Arizona)

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(Newser) – You can start believing in magic again, because not only are fanged deer real, it turns out unicorns are, too. Well, sort of. In August, a hunter shot an elderly roe deer bearing a single, centered antler in the forests of Slovenia, reports *National Geographic*. It's not uncommon to find deer with just a "spike"—what a remaining antler is called after one is lost; even an injury to a buck's hind leg can cause an abnormality. But in this case, both antlers had fused into one, giving a unicorn-like appearance. This was a first for scientist Boštjan Pokorny, who confirmed the roe deer's fantastical and "untypical" deformity, which *National Geographic* notes was probably caused by an injury sustained as the antlers were forming, which is an annual occurrence.

The roe deer lived to be quite old and was a little pudgy, leading Pokorny to infer his unusual deformity didn't hold him back in life. Meanwhile, on another continent, another hunter also recently bagged a "unicorn deer." KULR reports Amy Calkins shot what she thought was her first buck in Washington state in mid-October—except it turned out to be a doe with a single antler. Calkins posted photos on Facebook of the deer and its four teats, and she says she later learned that a hormone imbalance caused the unusual growth. Mississippi State University's Deer Lab notes that it's "difficult to identify the particular cause of a particular buck's (or doe's) abnormality without a detailed dissection or necropsy." It's unclear if one occurred in this case. (A unicorn deer was famously spotted in Italy in 2008.)

A few years ago, this roe deer—nicknamed Unicorn"—was found living in an Italian nature preserve.

backtooakland

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'We have been cursed to become useless drunks' residents say after digging up muthi

2014 November 29 09:47:13 zimkasi.com

'We have been cursed to become useless drunks' residents say after digging up muthi

Published: 2014 November 03 07:20:07 (1000 Views)
Residents who allegedly dug up a muthi bottle with a list of their names inside say they have been cursed to become useless drunks.

The bottle was tied with green and red ropes, and was found buried near the toilet in their yard in Alexandra, north-east of Johannesburg, on Saturday morning.

"We drink every day, all day long," Charlotte Vukeya (35) told Daily Sun.

"Nobody in this yard has a life. We live for alcohol and fighting. That note cursed us to drink, fight and end up in jail. I can't keep a man. They always leave me and I don't even have kids yet."

Charlotte said one of the men she dated told her there were evil forces in the yard, but she didn't listen to him.

Another resident, Makatani Tshapo (37), said he is self-employed and makes R1 000 a day.

"But I only have one pair of pants and a pair of flip flops," he said.

"I love alcohol. I go to bed with a beer bottle in my hand. As soon as I wake up I get another beer. I don't know why anyone would make us this way. This place is like a war zone. We fight with each other every day," he said.

Tintswalo Ntsumela (48) said that she hasn't had a job in 17 years.

"I may not have food in the house, but I always have a plan to get alcohol," she said.

The residents want the curse returned to the person who sent it.

Source - Dailysun

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10,000 Year Old Rock Paintings Depicting Aliens and UFOs Found in India(Photos) | EveryDayBreakingNews.com

This entry was posted in Conspiracies, News, Truth on July 16, 2014 by admin.

One of the ancient rock paintings carved on caves at Charama in Chhattisgarh's Kanker district. (TOI photo by Amit Bhardwaj)

Chhattisgarh state department of archaeology and culture plans to seek help from Nasa and Isro for research on 10,000-year-old rock paintings depicting aliens and UFOs in Charama region in Kanker district in tribal Bastar region.

According to archaeologist JR Bhagat, these paintings have depicted aliens like those shown in Hollywood and Bollywood flicks. Located about 130km from Raipur, the caves come under village Chandeli and Gotitola.

image

image

"The findings suggest that humans in prehistoric times may have seen or imagined beings from other planets which still create curiosity among people and researchers. Extensive research is needed for further findings. Chhattisgarh presently doesn't have any such expert who could give clarity on the subject," Bhagat told TOI.

image

There are several beliefs among locals in these villages. While few worship the paintings, others narrate stories they have heard from ancestors about "rohela people" — the small sized ones — who used to land from sky in a round shaped flying object and take away one

or two persons of village who never returned.

“The paintings are done in natural colours that have hardly faded despite the years. The strangely carved figures are seen holding weapon-like objects and do not have clear features. Specially, the nose and mouth are missing. In few pictures, they are even shown wearing space suits. We can’t refute possibility of imagination by prehistoric men but humans usually fancy such things,” the archaeologist said.

He added that it is a co-incidence that such ancient images appear to have sharp resemblance to UFOs shown in alien movies. “The fan-like antenna and three legs of vehicle’s stand clearly show a similarity to UFO type craft,” he said.

Other archaeologists would also be consulted for further verification.

source:

timesofindia

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100 Braaaaaiiins MISSING

huffingtonpost.com

Posted: 12/03/2014 12:09 pm EST Updated: 12/03/2014 2:59 pm EST

UPDATE: The brains have been found

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — The University of Texas at Austin is missing about 100 brains — about half of the specimens the university had in a collection of brains preserved in jars of formaldehyde.

One of the missing brains is believed to have belonged to clock tower sniper Charles Whitman.

"We think somebody may have taken the brains, but we don't know at all for sure," psychology Professor Tim Schallert, co-curator of the collection, told the Austin American-Statesman (http://bit.ly/11R7vym).

His co-curator, psychology Professor Lawrence Cormack, said, "It's entirely possible word got around among undergraduates and people started swiping them for living rooms or Halloween pranks."

The Austin State Hospital had transferred the brains to the university about 28 years ago under a "temporary possession" agreement. Schallert said his psychology lab had room for only 100 brains, so the rest were moved to the basement of the university's Animal Resources Center.

"They are no longer in the basement," Cormack said.

The university said in a statement that it will investigate "the circumstances surrounding this collection since it came here nearly 30 years ago" and that it's "committed to treating the brain specimens with respect." It says the remaining brain specimens on campus are used "as a teaching tool and carefully curated by faculty."

The university's agreement with the hospital required the school to remove any data that might identify the person from whom the brain came. However, Schallert said Whitman's brain likely was part of the collection.

"It would make sense it would be in this group. We can't find that brain," he said.

Whitman's 1966 rampage at the University of Texas killed 16 people, including his mother and wife.

The 100 remaining brains at the school have been moved to the Norman Hackerman Building, where they are being scanned with high-resolution resonance imaging equipment, Cormack said.

"These MRI images will be both useful teaching and research tools. It keeps the brains

intact," he told the newspaper.

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The New York Times **Archives**

2 Held in Thrill-Killings of Pizza Men

By ROBERT D. McFADDEN

Published: April 22, 1997
http://www.nytimes.com/1997/04/22/nyregion/2-held-in-thrill-killings-of-pizza-men.html

Two small-town New Jersey teen-agers were arrested yesterday and charged with what officials called the brutal, senseless and elaborately plotted murders of two pizza deliverymen, who were lured to an abandoned house in a remote area of Sussex County Saturday night and shot to death in their car.

The victims appeared to have been chosen randomly, their wallets and cash untouched. Officials said the slayers' motive -- if there was one -- may have been the thrill of killing.

"They just wanted to see what it would be like to kill somebody," said one law-enforcement official.

Sussex County investigators said the killers had called four pizza parlors before finding one willing to deliver to an isolated spot in Franklin, a hamlet in the northwest corner of New Jersey where domestic trouble and shoplifting are the usual police-blotter items. The gunmen were waiting in the dark when the deliverymen arrived at the ramshackle house sometime after 10:30 P.M.

Reconstructing the crime from shell casings, bullet holes, shattered glass and other evidence, investigators said that the passenger-side window was apparently rolled down so two cheese pizzas could be handed over, and the assailants opened fire with .45- and .22-caliber pistols.

The victims were both shot repeatedly in the head and upper body. Their car then rolled 30 yards down the road and veered into the edge of a marsh. There, officials said, the victims were both pulled from the blood-spattered car, laid face down on the ground and each shot again in the back of the head.

The Sussex County Prosecutor, Dennis O'Leary, called the murders chilling and unlike anything in his experience. "Any homicides I've been involved with, even as senseless as they appear, were rooted in some motive you could place some logic behind," he said. "This appears to be a particularly senseless act. There's nothing to indicate they cared much who the deliverymen were."

The final shots were like an execution, said William Geffken, the chief of detectives for the prosecutor's office, even though the victims may already have been dead. An hour after the shootings, a motorist saw the car nosed into the bog with its headlights on and called the police, who found the bodies of Georgio Gallara, 24, of Augusta, N.J., and Jeremy Giordano, 22, of Hardyston.

Investigators later traced calls made Saturday night to Tony's Pizza and Pasta Restaurant -- Mr. Gallara was the owner and Mr. Giordano his employee -- on Route 94 in Hamburg, just north of Franklin Borough, and to four other pizza shops in the area. All had come from a pay phone at a Dunkin' Donuts shop in Franklin. People who had been there Saturday night identified two youths who made calls from the pay phone.

At 2:30 A.M. yesterday, the police arrested Thomas J. Koskovich, 18, at his home in Franklin, and three hours later a 17-year-old was picked up at his home in nearby Vernon Township. His name was withheld by officials because he is a juvenile, but neighbors and acquaintances identified him as Jay Vreeland. Both were charged in the murders and with possession of .45- and .22-caliber handguns stolen in a recent burglary and found at Mr. Koskovich's home.

Mr. Koskovich was arraigned before Judge Lorraine C. Parker in Superior Court in Newton and ordered held at the Sussex County Jail in $1 million bail. His lawyer, David Nufrio, a public defender, entered a plea of not guilty but did not contest the bail. The 17-year-old appeared in a closed proceeding and was ordered held at a jail for juveniles.

Both suspects were described by acquaintances and the authorities as troubled youths: Mr. Koskovich, who brought guns to his vocational school before he dropped out two weeks ago and who has lived with grandparents since his parents divorced; Mr. Vreeland, who has a record of arrests, including one for shooting pellet guns at people recently, who broke up with a girlfriend not long ago and, though still in vocational school, seemed to be leading an aimless existence.

The murders and arrests stunned residents of Franklin, Hamburg, Vernon and other small communities in the rolling hills of largely rural Sussex County, where unemployment is high, opportunity limited and poverty present but largely hidden among the natural beauty of forests and lakes in northwest New Jersey.

In sharp contrast to the profiles of the suspects, friends and relatives of Jeremy Giordano and Georgio Gallara said that the victims were both unmarried, hard-working, friendly young men whose lives could not be measured by money, academic achievement or business accomplishments, but were made meaningful by countless little things that they did every day for their neighbors.

"Jeremy was always volunteering to help me, shoveling snow or chopping ice outside my store in winter," said Donna Rockafellow, the owner of Donna's Boutique, a few doors down from Tony's Pizza in a small strip mall called the Hardyston Mercantile on Route 94. She said she went into Tony's every day for lunch. She said of Mr. Gallara: "He walked with a bounce. He was a sweet man. He was always giving us extra treats, powdered pastries, appetizers, and

never charged for them."

Just across the highway, Mr. Giordano lived with his father, Joseph; mother, Loretta, and two sisters. He graduated from Wallkill High School in 1994, and on the living room mantle was a plaque for wrestling. "He didn't do that well, but he tried like hell," said his father, eyes brimming with tears. "Somehow this whole thing has to impart a meaning, a lesson for people."

Friends of Mr. Gallara said he had graduated from High Point High School in Sussex County in 1990 and lived with his parents. "He was a wonderful person," said Cecelia Ciaccio, 25, a cousin and classmate. "He would do anything for anyone. He loved his family and had a million and one friends."

John Veltri, a wrecking company owner, said Mr. Gallara opened the pizzeria several years ago and, trying hard to build business, had been willing to deliver anytime, anywhere. That, apparently, was a factor in his death.

Investigators said Mr. Vreeland, a student at the Sussex County Vocational-Technical School, and Mr. Koskovich, who had dropped out of it, made a series of calls to pizzerias from the pay phone at the Dunkin' Donuts shop on Route 23 in Franklin between 10 and 10:30 P.M. Saturday.
Three shops said they did not deliver, and a fourth, the Inn-Pasta Family Restaurant, declined to deliver because the caller sounded suspicious. Tim Kiester, the manager, said the caller said he had just moved into his house and could not give a phone number, and was even vague about the address. But Mr. Gallara agreed to deliver two cheese pizzas to 196 Scott Road, on a lonely rural lane west of Franklin.

He and Mr. Giordano set out shortly before 10:30 P.M., driving south on Route 94 and east on Route 631, then turning onto Scott Road. A sign there says: "Road Closed. Bridge Under Repair." After passing a cluster of homes, the road winds through an unpopulated and dreary landscape: a company that makes holding tanks for septic systems, a tumbledown farmhouse, a cemetery.

A mile up the road, in a depression out of sight of the surrounding countryside, they found the place, a desolate old house with broken shingles on the roof and sides, shattered and boarded-up windows, a sagging porch and an untended overgrown yard: a mausoleum out of Poe. It had been empty for a decade, people down the road would recall.

"The location was thought out in advance," Mr. O'Leary, the Prosecutor, said, saying it had been chosen for its remoteness.

The assailants were waiting in the dark at the curb, investigators said, and when the passenger-

side window was rolled down, apparently to pass pizzas through, the gunmen opened fire through the window, striking both victims repeatedly in the head and upper body. Most of the shell casings were found at the curbside.

The car, pointed north, rolled 30 yards beyond the house and veered off into a bog, officials said. The victims may have been dead, officials said, but they were pulled out anyway, laid face down on the ground and shot through the back of the head, execution style.

Mr. O'Leary said the victims still had their wallets and cash, and the pizzas were left uneaten. He called the killings "cold blooded," "senseless" and baffling. "Even the most heinous murders usually have some semblance of a motive, even if it's not a rational one," he said.

Eight shots were fired, seven from a .45 and one from a .22, all at close range, officials said. Weapons of those calibers were found at Mr. Koskovich's home. Both had been stolen in a burglary two weeks ago at a sporting goods shop in Franklin, they said.

After the arrests yesterday, Mr. O'Leary described the suspects as friends, but said he did not know how long they had known each other. He also said that Mr. Vreeland may have known Mr. Giordano, but he said that was a mere coincidence in a small community where most people know one another.

Buddy Duziak, 17, a junior at the vocational school, said Mr. Koskovich had quit school two weeks ago. "He would bring shotguns in all the time," Mr. Duziak said. "We all thought he was trying to be tough."

Photos: Thomas J. Koskovich was led from court yesterday after being charged with luring pizza deliverers to their deaths. Valerie Giordano, left, was comforted by a friend, Kathy Prestia, at the site of her brother's killing. (Photographs by Joyce Dopkeen/The New York Times)(pg. A1); A bouquet was left at the door of Tony's Pizza and Pasta Restaurant in Hamburg, N.J. The owner, Georgio Gallara, and an employee, Jeremy Giordano, below, in a 1994 high school photograph, were killed on Saturday. (Joyce Dopkeen/The New York Times) (pg. B6) Map of New Jersey Showing location of Franklin: A fatal ambush of pizza deliverers was in a remote area of Franklin. (pg. B6)

5-foot crucifix stolen from NYC church during Mass

Updated 3:43 pm, Saturday, December 6, 2014 sfgate.com

NEW YORK (AP) — Police say a 5-foot-tall wooden crucifix has been stolen from the entryway of a Roman Catholic church during Mass in New York City.

Police say Saturday the $5,000 cross was reported missing Wednesday night from the lobby of Saint Anthony of Padua in the Bronx's Morrisania neighborhood.

Pastor Josu Iriondo tells the New York Post (http://bit.ly/1CSFF5w) the crucifix must have been unscrewed from the wall. He says parishioners may have mistaken the heist for renovations.

The 75-year-old pastor tells the newspaper congregants are praying for its safe return.

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A Flooded Mexican Ghost Town Offers Refuge to Border Crossers

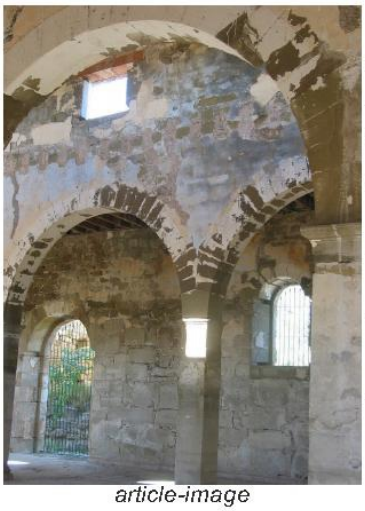
atlasobscura.com

The ghost town of Guerrero Viejo, Mexico (all photographs by the author)

The ruins of Guerrero Viejo perch precariously on the shores of Falcon Reservoir on the Mexico side of the Texas-Mexico border.

In 1953, the residents of this 250-year-old town were forcibly displaced when the United States and Mexico agreed to build a dam on the Rio Grande river in order to supply water to southern Texas and northern Mexico. As the waters rose, most of the city's residents were relocated to Nuevo Guerrero, some 10 kilometers away.

But not everybody left. As Guerrero Viejo became a ghost town, some residents insisted on staying in the only homes they had ever known, despite being cut off from essential services. They lived in the abandoned town, unwilling to leave the only streets they had known, and the cemetery where their loved ones were buried. (In 1997, the Mexican author Elena Poniatowska chronicled the memories and daily life of the town's few remaining residents for her brooding, melancholic book *Guerrero Viejo*.)



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By the time I visited in 2004, none of the original inhabitants were still there. Thanks to a long drought, the floodwaters had receded and the town had reemerged as a rough outline of its former self. Cacti sprouted from rooftops, trees grew out of doorways, rubble colonized roads.

A ghost town in more than one sense, Guerrero Viejo had also become also a place of transit, or perhaps, residence, for people who could not be seen. Although it lacks basic infrastructure, its proximity to the US (just across the lake) and shelter (however tenuous) from the elements made it an attractive option for some planning a route across the border. During my visit I saw makeshift altars with fake flowers, as well as abandoned water bottles and clothing. In recent years, Guerrero Viejo has also become a haven for violent drug gangs, who in 2010 killed an American visiting the ruins on jet skis.

In the early 2000s, a group of determined preservationists took on the daunting task of raising funds to restore the town. They partially restored the church — Iglesia Nuestra Señora del Refugio — despite its having been submerged in Falcon Reservoir for nearly 50 years. Although much of the church's interior had been restored, the rest of the town was clearly giving way to its inevitable fate.

In the past few years, Guerrero Viejo has again begun its tug-of-war with nature as the waters have returned, consuming part of the church. And yet, I understand the compulsion to defy the laws of nature and dedicate so much energy to rehabilitating a town doomed to drown, over and over again. Guerrero Viejo is not one of the wonders of the world. It's a small town in a part of the world that's usually ignored, and that was once flooded because it was in the way of a dam. The fact that it was being so carefully rebuilt was a different kind of triumph: of a small group of people who cared enough about the town's importance to their collective memory to take it back.

I don't know what Guerrero Viejo looks like today, but I hope one building in particular is still standing — the one where, on a ceiling beam almost 140 years ago, someone carefully etched the phrase "Viva la Republica Mejicana C. Guerrero Viejo Julio 2 de 1875."

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All photographs by the author.

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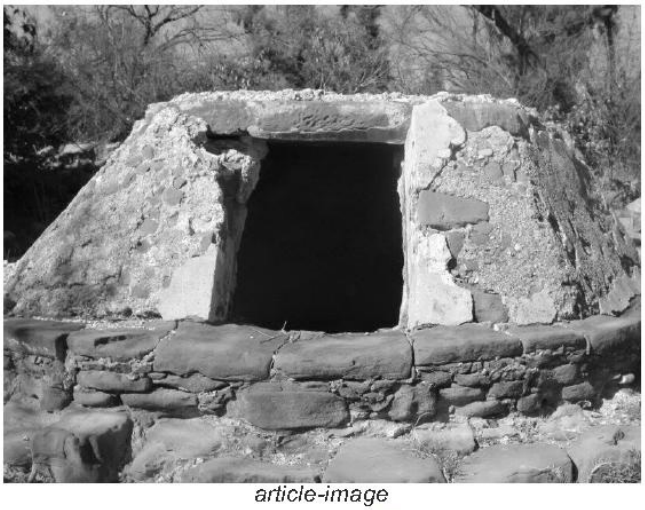

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A Submerged Town at Round Valley, Lebanon, New Jersey? scubadiving.com

August 8, 2002
by EYESIX

Round Valley reservoir is part of the NJ park system and is most often used for recreational fishing, swimming and camping. The park is less often used for scuba diving. To our knowledge, most of the lake's terrain is undocumented, nothing can be had on the Internet, or usenet.

History:

Over 50 years ago, it was once a town in a valley that was purchased by the government, then dammed at its exits, allowed to slowly flooded from ground water, later actively pumped up to flood the area to its current level. Its used as a reserve water supply to the NJ water system, should the principle reservoir run low. Direction to Round Valley are available from any website on the NJ park system.

http://www.state.nj.us/dep/forestry/parks/round.htm

Almost no reports exist on diving the open lake at Round Valley. So, I thought this would help those with adventure fever start where we left off.

$7 is charged for an entrance fee, and divers must report their plans to the ranger station, and report back to the station exactly at 4pm, or be banned from the lake. Maps of the reservoir are available through its website, and free on site, but detailed maps of the former town are taken from fishing maps [Walmart map for about $8.] We saw mostly sunfish in the lake. We were told by park rangers that there is NO SWIMMING OR DIVING at the reservoir, except where designated, yet earlier calls to the station mentioned that the lake was available so long as we took a dive flag and logged our dive plan with the station. I STRONGLY suggest you inquire at the station and log your dive plan, should you choose to dive the lake. Any artifacts found should be turned in to the rangers, per lengthy rules :)

Dive Planning:

The Valley is about 400 feet above sea level, but this factors little into the dive plan.

My buddy located clusters of houses around the remnants of the road system, found old aerial photos and maps of the town. If you match the terrain of the images to the photos, you'll find the best collection of houses to dive. He wanted to see what the lake would yield, so invited me to dive Round Valley.

Maps directly available from the ranger station include distance, terrain and estimated depths, and houses are located far from shore, and in water at least from 40-60' deep. However, the road system used by the town is at the 90' mark, and just immediately EAST of the submerged road, it plunges to areas as deep as 160'. Note, depths assume the lake's water level is at maximum. When we were there, the shoreline was at least 10' lower than normal.

The cluster of houses marked on the map is over a 1000 feet from entrance point, marked E on the map. The northernmost houses are another 1000' North from houses we planned for.

The size, terrain, and depth of the lake are not for inexperienced divers. You must have excellent navigation skills, doubles, a dry suit, a bright or HID light, comfortable in cold water, bad vis and preferably technically trained for decompression. There are no park benches in the dive area, so bring your own table to help gear up.

The cluster of houses we planned for, and found, are marked X in the map. The northern cluster was preferred, but getting there was not easy. My Buddy suggested we drive on the 'do not drive' zones, and swim in the 'do not swim' zones in order to reach the bigger cluster of houses, but I chose not too, assuming we are caught, and then banned from the park to make future attempts impossible.

We dove this lake once before. To reach deep water required a 20 min long swim in shallow water on flat terrain, not more that 30'. However, we did reach 85' before turning back, as one buddy was low on gas. Today's dive we planned with divers only on doubles. We would use the flat terrain of the inbound swim as our depth reference for decompression, if necessary. As the potential for depth and exertion was there and Buddy was not trimix certified, we planned on air to a max depth of 130', with 02 deco, for a total decompression obligation of 5 min time, not bottom time. Planned as a multilevel dive on Decoplanner to consume 2/3rd of gases in the out and inbound dive phases, I estimated only 1 minute at 130' by the time we reached the site, and over 1 hour of dive time.

The Dive, the underwater terrain and houses:

We geared up and entered the water with crystal clear visibility to 20', pulling a dive flag behind us, and just before plunging in, are interrupted by a park ranger who states we cannot dive the lake! This is cleared up and we proceed.

The 20' vis soon degenerated to 10 mucky feet about 10 minutes off shore. The bottom of the lake is a very fine silt, frog kicking the distance is recommended as its easy enough to stir, and did. The 70F water temp dropped quickly to 50F past the thermocline at 30', and the vis deteriorated to 10' or less. The bottom of the lake is festooned with lost fishing lures with hooks, rare beer cans, rarer bottles, and one paddle. Otherwise flat and featureless, one can easily loose direction and need to strictly maintain the planned compass heading. Not knowing how the boaters respected the dive flag, I kept notice of boats, fishing line, and sounds of engines as the "grrrrrr" crossed atop us.

We continued this featureless and lifeless terrain for over 20 minutes at 30', until Buddy decides to abort the dive. We surface after a mid-water safety stop, and note we are on the right heading what appears like 1500' from shore. I suggest we push on our heading for 10 minutes then turn if we find nothing, as we both have plenty of gas. We submerge and press on. At the 5 minute mark, the terrain abruptly drops deeper, becomes colder and vis increases to 20', and depth leveled off at 50', with a visible drop ahead to a deeper depth. At this point I note Buddy is missing. I do a 360 and wave my HID light, and begin to head back on a reverse heading should Buddy be immediately behind me.

The Houses:

I immediately notice a grey stone wall at the base of the 50' mark. This wall is at least 5' tall, and constructed like many old homes in Pennsylvania. There is no life at this depth, no fish, weeds, just silt and water. The area had little in terms of recent debris, and there were traces of wood submerged within the silt. This wall had a small series of steps leading into a flat area, and as I followed it on a Westward heading, noted its rectangular shape, and the base was nearly covered in silt. The 'deeper drop off' that was immediately East of it could be the road, or its driveway. This structure appeared like the foundations of a house. There were some items sticking out of the silt within the base of this structure, and I noted another wall more South of this wall ... all at about 40'. Resisting the urge to explore further, I marked the area with a reel, and ascended from the spot to find Buddy.

A Problem:

I surface to find my buddy headed to shore and I note the surface location for a potential future boat attempt. It takes me 45 minutes to swim back to shore on the surface. We discuss diving practices thereafter. Buddy chose to surface swim back to shore without me, exposing himself to boat traffic without the dive flag as marker. He chose not to drop down the flag as I dove once he surfaced. He looses me in 40' of water, and also sites buoyancy issues with gear. He claims to have cave training. Hmmm ?

Conclusion:

The foundation are all that remain of a pair of houses submerged in Round Valley Reservior. They are located about 1500-1800' feet off shore, at a general NE heading from an area specified on the map. Expect to swim 3600' feet round trip to make these houses. I regret not having the time to explore and hunt for artifacts, but it seems unique underwater archeology can be had here. You may be the lucky one. An easier approach would be to take this dive on a boat to minimize the swimming, but as its poorly documented, the exact GPS coordinates or traingulation headings remain to be done. While the water is generally shallow at first, the potential for deep water excursions as suggested by the map suggest you plan these dives as deep dives.

GOOD LUCK AND HAPPY HUNTING.

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A tiger is on the loose near Disneyland Paris

November 13, 2014 | 8:23am

A tiger is on the loose near Disneyland Paris, French authorities said.

Police and firefighters armed with tranquilizer guns and a helicopter overhead were on the hunt for the big cat after the beast was spotted in the town of Montevrain early Thursday, Agence France-Presse reports.

“My wife saw it this morning,” said Jean-Baptiste Berdeaux, a manager at a nearby supermarket. “She didn’t get out of the car and called me to say, ‘I think I saw a lynx.’”

Berdeaux’s wife snapped a photo of the predator and called police, prompting town officials to send out a statement on Facebook warning residents in the area to remain indoors.

When authorities realized that the creature they’d be chasing was one of the deadliest animals on Earth, they moved swiftly to establish a massive perimeter around the wooded area where it was last seen — just 2½ miles away from the only Disneyland theme park in Europe, according to the Daily Star.

A big-cat wildlife park is located around 20 miles away from the town and a circus had recently passed through, but both have said all of their animals were accounted for.

A Disney spokesman said the giant feline is not theirs either — they don’t keep live tigers in the park.

“We have been running after it since this morning,” a police source told AFP. “Police officers are trying to intercept it.”

Officials searching for the tiger have been able to track its movement after they found a set of his paw prints, French TV station TF1 reports.

Hot on his heels, authorities say the striped prowler is hiding in bushes behind a football field. The town of Montevrain is around 25 miles east of Paris and is home to about 8,000 people, according to AFP.

“If it’s possible, we’ll try and put it to sleep,” a police spokesman on the scene said. “If it becomes dangerous or aggressive, the order will be given to kill it.”

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Waxworms get their name from their preferred living situation—as parasites in bee colonies, where they munch their way through their hosts' waxy hive. Their unusual diet extends beyond wax, however. When they live close to humans, they will also nibble on packaging.

Researchers from Beihang University and Stanford University decided to investigate how the worms manage to maintain their peculiar eating habits. The researchers suspected that, like cows that use microbes living in their rumens to digest grass, the worms might also have a mutually beneficial arrangement with bacteria.

Their hunch proved right: the researchers found that two types of bacteria living inside the worm—*Enterobacter asburiae* and *Bacillus* sp. YP1—happily munch their way through polyethylene films, even when isolated from their invertebrate host. Over a 60 day period, the two bacterial colonies degraded about 6 percent and 10 percent of a 100 mg piece of plastic, respectively.

Polyethylene is considered non-biodegradable and is also the most pervasive type of plastic around. The bacteria, however, hint at the possibility of finding a natural way to degrade that pervasive pollutant. As the researchers write, the results "provided promising evidence for the biodegradation of [polyethylene] in the environment."

But given the incredible amount of plastic pollution that's already around (and doesn't seem to be naturally biodegrading), it's probably easier and more effective to just limit the amount of polyethylene plastic littering the planet in the first place.

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The Truth About That 'Green' Cat...

The Huffington Post | By Hilary Hanson huffingtonpost.com

Posted: 12/05/2014 1:24 pm EST Updated: 12/05/2014 2:59 pm EST

green cat

False cat, true cat. Green cat, blue cat.

Green cat is a lie, or the forgery of a mind addled with color blindness. The cat, to anyone with working eyes, is a shade of teal or cyan.

Teal: "a medium to dark greenish-blue color."

Cyan:" a greenish-blue color."

Greenish-blue. Blue, with just a hint of green. Forget everything you knew about green cat, if what you "knew" was that the feline was green. If you knew the cat was blue all along, remember what you knew.

Also the backstory claiming the cat obtained its unnatural hue from sleeping in brightly colored paint sounds a little suspicious, but that's not the point right now.

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Adorable mug shot of 19th century pear-nibbling toddler

ridiculouslyinteresting.com

1893 Mug shot of two year old Francois Bertillon

Alphonse Bertillon was a French police officer and biometrics researcher who was responsible for standardizing the modern mug shot. (Fun fact: the profile shot was included because Bertillon thought our ear shape might become a unique identifier, in the days before fingerprinting). This freaking adorable mug shot features his two-year old son François Bertillon, a hardened criminal who was caught nibbling all the pears from a basket on 17 October 1893.

This mug shot is adorable, but it is also a pretty remarkable as a historical artefact: it is one of those rare objects that documents a part of history while also giving us a glimpse into the life and personality of its creator. Like most historical innovators, Alphonse Bertillon is usually only remembered in the context of his life's work, just a name attached to a set of achievments. Capturing a lighthearted moment in his life and relationship with his son, this photograph brings Bertillon to life as a real man and a father. I can't help but look at this photograph and imagine the exchange between naughty son and bemused father, perhaps as he worked on inventing mug shots in his workshop one afternoon. Mug shots have become one of the most iconic and recognizable photographic forms in the twentieth-century; this image is so special because it infuses this relic of visual culture with the personal history of its inventor.

// Image: Alphonse Bertillon, 17 October 1893. Silver albumen print, 8.1 x 12.7 cm. Via the Museum of Modern Art, New York.

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Allen's Lane

It's a headless horseman's ghost that rides here, a Revolutionary War soldier who lost his head in battle. On foggy, dreary nights, he is said to ride by on horseback carrying his severed noggin. Reports say although the story dates from the Revolutionary War period of the 1700s, the horseman has been seen as recently as the 1980s by two policemen.

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The true story of Resurrection Mary!

The Death of the "Original" Resurrection Mary

In the early morning hours of March 10, 1934, a young woman who died in an automobile accident went on to become the original source for Chicago's most famous ghost – Resurrection Mary. Her name was Mary Bregovy and she was a young Polish factory worker from the Back of the Yards neighborhood, but her death created a legend that is still being told today. There is no ghost in Chicago history that is as famous as "Resurrection Mary," the beautiful spirit who hitches rides along Archer Avenue on the Southwest Side, but for many years, her origins remained a mystery.

After more than a decade and a half of research, however, I have come to believe there are actually two different young women (and perhaps more!) whose combined deaths created the legend that we know of as "Resurrection Mary." One of them was Mary Bregovy…

According to legend, the story of Resurrection Mary began with the death of a young woman who was killed while hitchhiking on Archer Avenue in the middle 1930s. This is the popular version of the story and as all of the elements of Chicago's greatest haunting --- a beautiful blonde, a lonely highway, a popular big-band ballroom and, of course, a hitchhiking ghost.

Many would dismiss this story as nothing more than an urban legend gone awry, a bedtime story that has taken on a life of its own over the years. Others would argue this and recount the most widely told version of the tale, never wavering from the idea that they believe the story to be true. Unfortunately though, the story of Resurrection Mary is filled with mystery --- and myth --- and nothing about it is simple. It's a complicated tale of two young women and a single legend that became, without question, American's greatest ghost story.

The legend of Resurrection Mary began at the Oh Henry Ballroom (now known as the Willowbrook Ballroom), a popular place for swing and big-band dancing during the middle 1930s. The ballroom is still located today on the south stretch of Archer Avenue in Willow Springs. Many years ago, this was a somewhat secluded place, nestled among the trees in a small town with a "wide open" reputation for booze, gambling and prostitution. Young people from all over the south side came to the Oh Henry Ballroom for music and dancing and owner

John Verderbar was known for booking the hottest bands in the Chicago area and the biggest acts that traveled around the country.

The story goes that Mary came to the Oh Henry one night with a boyfriend and they spent the evening dancing and drinking. At some point, they got into an argument and Mary stormed out of the place. Even though it was a cold winter's night, she decided that she would rather face a cold walk home than another minute with her obnoxious boyfriend. She left the ballroom and started walking up Archer Avenue. She had not gotten very far when she was struck and killed by a passing automobile. The driver fled the scene and Mary was left there to die.

Resurrection Cemetery

Her grieving parents buried her in Resurrection Cemetery, wearing her favorite party dress and her dancing shoes. Since that time, her spirit has been seen along Archer Avenue, perhaps trying to return to her grave after one last night among the living. Motorists started picking up a young woman on Archer Avenue, who offered them vague directions to take her home, who would then vanish from the automobile at the gates to Resurrection Cemetery.

But is there any truth to this legend? Did a young woman actually die after leaving the Oh Henry Ballroom and then begin haunting Archer Avenue? Many say that none of this ever happened. They speculate that "Mary" never existed at all. They dismiss the idea of bothering to search for her identity and believe she is nothing more than an "urban legend" and a piece of fascinating folklore. She is, they say, nothing more than Chicago's own "vanishing hitchhiker".

While the story of Resurrection Mary does bear some resemblance to the classic bit of American highway lore that we call the "vanishing hitchhiker", the folklorists have forgotten an important thing about Mary's story that other versions of the don't have --- credible eyewitness accounts, places, times and dates. Many of these reports are not just stories that have been passed from person to person and rely on a "friend of a friend" for authenticity. In fact, some of the encounters with Mary have been chillingly up close and personal and remain unexplained to this day.

In addition, the story of Mary includes something that the urban legends leave out --- actually physical evidence of her presence. I'm not referring to the mythical coats and lettermen's

jackets that have been found neatly folded over gravesites but actual physical happenings that have been attributed to her ghost, as well as handprints that have been left behind, scorched into the bars of an iron gate.

And Mary, unlike our highway legends, springs from real-life counterparts for which evidence remains about their lives --- and deaths.

Historically speaking, the first reports of Resurrection Mary came from the late spring of 1934. It was at this time that motorists on Archer Avenue, passing in front of Resurrection Cemetery, began telling of a young woman who would appear on the roadway, as if trying to hitch a ride. On some occasions, she became frantic as cars passed her by and many times, actually desperate. Motorists told of the woman running toward them across the road, trying to climb onto the running boards of their automobiles and sometimes, even trying to climb into the open back windows! They all described her in the same way, wearing a light-colored dress and having curly, light brown hair that reached to her shoulders.

What made matters worse is that many of the people in these automobiles, who were residents of the southwest side, actually recognized this young woman. Her name was Mary Bregovy and some of these motorists were her friends. They laughed with her, drank with her and often danced with her at their favorite spot, the Oh Henry Ballroom. Of course, that had been in the past because when they began seeing Mary trying to flag them down on Archer Avenue --- she had been dead for several weeks!

Newspaper images of Mary Bregovy from the 1930s

Mary Bregovy was 21 years-old in March 1934. She had been born on April 7, 1912 and attended St. Michael's Grammar School, a short distance from her home. She lived in a small home at 4611 South Damen Avenue, which was in the stockyards neighborhood of Bridgeport. She was of Polish descent and was employed at a local factory, where she worked hard to help support her mother, father and two younger brothers, Steve and Joseph, during the early days of the Great Depression.

Friends would later remember her as an extremely fun-loving girl who loved to go to parties and loved to go out dancing, especially to the Oh Henry Ballroom, which was her favorite place. Her friend LaVern Rutkowski, who grew up with Mary on the southwest side and lived

just two houses away from her, recalled in a 1984 interview: “She was personality plus. She always had a smile and you never saw her unhappy.”

Mrs. Rutkowski, or “Vern” as she was commonly known, spent Mary’s final day with her on March 10, 1934. The two of them spent a lot of time together and years later, Vern would vividly recall going out with Mary to dance halls all over the southwest side. Ironically, Mary’s parents had forbidden her to go out on the night of March 10 and Mary might have listened to them if she and Vern had not met a couple of young men earlier that day. These two men, who are believed to have been John Reiker and John Thoel, were in the car that night when Mary was killed.

The former Goldblatt’s store at 47th and Ashland, where Mary and Vern spent their final day together.

Mary and Vern spent that Saturday afternoon shopping at 47th Street and Ashland Avenue and it was in one of the stores located here that they met the two boys. After getting into their car to go for a ride, Vern took an instant dislike to them. She said: “They looked like wild boys and for some reason I just didn’t like them.” Vern added that they drove recklessly, turning corners on two wheels and speeding down narrow streets. Finally, Vern demanded to be let out of the car a few blocks from home. She asked Mary if she planned to go out with the young men that night and Mary said that she did. Vern urged her to reconsider, not only because she didn’t like the boys but also because Mary’s parents had already told her that she couldn’t. Mary shrugged off her friend’s warnings. She simply replied: “You never like anyone I introduce you to.”

Vern stood watching on the street corner as Mary and the young men roared away in the car. It was the last time that she would ever see her friend alive.

The Bregovy home was located here in this row of modest homes in the Back of the Yards neighborhood.

No one knows how Mary Bregovy spent the rest of the day but a few clues have emerged from family members over the years. The wife of Mary's younger brother, Steve, reported in 1985 that she had received a letter from a friend of Mary's years before that stated Mary planned to attend a novena at church before she went out dancing that night. The Bregovy's were devout Catholics and this would not have been out of the ordinary for Mary to do. She also said that she believed Mary had been going to the Oh Henry Ballroom that night.

But did she ever arrive there? No one knows for sure but tradition holds that Mary and her new friends, which now included a young woman named Virginia Rozanski, did go dancing at the Oh Henry Ballroom that night. After the ballroom closed, it is believed that they drove into the city, where most of the clubs stayed open much later. In the early morning hours, they were leaving downtown, traveling along Wacker Drive, likely headed for Archer Avenue, which would take Mary home to Bridgeport, when the deadly accident occurred. One has to wonder if alcohol, combined with the reckless driving described by Vern Rutkowski, combined to cause the crash.

A short piece in the March 11 edition of the *Chicago Tribune* described the accident:

Girl Killed in Crash

Miss Marie Bregovy, 21 years old, of 4611 South Damen Avenue, was killed last night when the automobile in which she was riding cracked up at Lake Street and Wacker Drive. John Reiker, 23, of 15 North Knight Street, Park Ridge, suffered a possible skull fracture and is in the county hospital. John Thoel, 25, 5216 Loomis Street, driver of the car, and Miss Virginia Rozanski, 22, of 4849 South Lincoln Street, were shaken up and scratched. The scene of the accident is known to police as a danger spot. Thoel told police he did not see the "L" substructure.

The accident occurred along Wacker Drive, just as it curves to the south and away from the Chicago River. At the point where Wacker crosses Lake Street, there is a large, metal support for the elevated tracks overhead. If a driver was coming along Wacker too quickly, it could be easy to not make a complete turn and collide with the support column, which is almost in a straight line around the curve. This is apparently what happened to John Thoel

that night.

When the automobile collided with the metal column, Mary was thrown through the windshield and instantly killed. She was also badly cut up by the glass. Before her funeral, the undertaker had to sew up a gash that extended all of the way across the front of her throat and up to her right ear. Tragically, Mary was not even supposed to be sitting in the front seat when the accident occurred. Her parents would later learn that she had switched places with Virginia Rozanski because she didn't like John Thoel, who she had been sitting next to in the passenger's seat. She had asked Mary to sit in front with Thoel and Mary had agreed. Unfortunately, her good-natured personality would turn out to be fatal for her.

Vern Rutkowski accompanied Mary's mother and her brother, Joseph, to the morgue to identify the body. Mary was taken to the Satala Funeral Home, located just a couple of blocks from the Bregovy home, to be prepared for burial. The owner at the time, John Satala, easily remembered Mary. In 1985, he recalled: "She was a hell of a nice girl. Very pretty. She was buried in an orchid dress. I remember having to sew up the side of her face."

The Satala Funeral Home, where Mary Bregovy was prepared for burial

Mary was buried in Resurrection Cemetery and this is where some of the confusion about her story comes along. According to records, Mary was buried in Section MM, Site 9819. There was a Mary Bregovy buried here, but it was not the young woman who was killed in March 1934. A search for this gravesite revealed that the Mary Bregovy laid to rest here was a 34 year-old mother who was born in 1888 and died in 1922. This is a different Mary Bregovy altogether! Family members of Mary Bregovy said that Mary was actually buried in a term grave and never moved. After World War II, when space was needed for more burial sites at Resurrection Cemetery, some of the term graves were moved but others, like Mary's, were simply covered over. For this reason, according to Mrs. Steve Bregovy, the location of Mary's grave is unknown. Could this be one of the reasons that her spirit is so restless?

The stories of Mary Bregovy's ghost began a very short time after her death. In April 1934, a caretaker at Resurrection Cemetery telephoned funeral home director John Satala and told him that he had seen the barefooted ghost of a young girl walking around the cemetery. She was a lovely girl with light brown hair and she was wearing a pale, orchid-colored dress. The

caretaker was positive that the ghost was the woman that Satala had recently buried. Satala later said that he recognized the description of the girl as Mary Bregovy.

Soon after, other reports began to appear, like the earlier mentioned accounts of a woman matching Mary's description who was trying to hitch rides in front of the cemetery. These Archer Avenue sightings also included reports from people who actually recognized the ghost as Mary Bregovy.

I'm convinced that these reports were the beginning of the Resurrection Mary legend. These were the first stories of a young woman hitching rides on Archer Avenue and thanks to the destination of many of these motorists, combined with the fact that the Oh Henry Ballroom was Mary's favorite dance spot, the story began to grow. I believe that many of the reports of a ghostly woman being seen around Resurrection Cemetery can be traced to Mary Bregovy --- the "original Resurrection Mary".

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VIDEO: Animal Heads Found Dangling From Park Slope Street Light - Park Slope - DNAinfo.com New York

Updated on November 4, 2014 12:31pm dnainfo.com

PARK SLOPE — A pair of skinned animal heads were found dangling from a street light at a busy Park Slope intersection Tuesday morning, police said.

At least one witness called 911 after spotting the bloody skulls, which appeared to be goat heads, attached to a piece of twine hanging above Ninth Street and Fifth Avenue — sparking a police investigation, officials said.

Uniformed officers showed up at the scene shortly before 11:30 a.m., as passersby walked by apparently unaware of the gruesome sight just feet above their heads.

The skulls dangled in the wind until shortly before noon, when a staffer from a nearby car service company, Continental Car Service, carried a ladder to the pole and knocked them down with a stick.

The man, who declined to give his name, then threw the heads in the garbage.

A Twitter post with a photo of the grisly sight quickly generated questions and speculation. Some wondered whether it was Santeria, a Halloween prank or voodoo.

"Maybe it's some of those wackos who go for Santeria or voodoo," said local resident Louis Katenzakes. "It's the occult. They do rituals. They kill animals."

Lorenzo Hernandez, a butcher at Alnoor Halal Meat Market on 21st Street off Fourth Avenue, said the heads appeared to belong to goats and they appeared to be cut by hand, not by a machine.

He said goat meat is sold at many butchers on Fifth Avenue and that his market sells the meat every day.

"Most people use it for food," Hernandez said. "The head especially, for soup."

The sighting wasn't the first example of animal body parts discovered in the area. In March, severed goat heads and rooster heads were found in Prospect Park.

Mohamed Almerdaie, who is from Yemen and whose family owns the building on the corner where the heads were found, said he's accustomed to seeing goat heads, but not hanging from a pole.

Slideshow

"In my country... You take the head off, then you put it in the oven. It tastes good. It's expensive, too. They say it's good for the body," said Almerdaie, "Over here, I don't know what it means."

Animal Heads Found Dangling From Park Slope Street Light

Still, other locals said they were unmoved.

"It's New York. I've seen the towers come down, so beyond that, nothing really stings that bad," said J. Sapp, 43, who works in the area.

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A 26-year-old **Australian** man who risked his life by diving into shark-infested waters to climb onto a rotting whale carcass has confessed that even his parents think he is an idiot.

Harrison Williams, of Quinns Rock, Perth, was out on a boat off the coast of Fremantle, Western Australia with some friends yesterday when he spotted the dead whale floating in the water.

"One of my mates said it would be pretty funny to surf the whale, so I did it," he told Seven News.

Mr Williams was seemingly not put off by the fact that hungry several tiger sharks and a **massive great white**, were circling around the carcass at the time.

After diving into the water, he climbed on top of the half eaten whale and 'surfed' it until his friends pulled the boat near enough for him to jump back on-board safely.

He told Seven News that he did not think he was in danger at the time. “[The sharks] were too busy chomping on the whale so it wasn’t too bad,” he said.

Not everyone shares his assessment of the situation though. “Mum thinks I’m an idiot, dad’s not too proud either,” he confessed.

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In the winter of 1939, the Soviet Union was dicks. Russian Premier Josef Stalin thought it would be really fucking hilarious if he all of a sudden sent like two million of his dudes over to nearby Finland to start kicking everyone's asses and seizing whatever land he could get his borsch-covered hands on, while simultaneously kicking puppies and shouting profanities at inanimate objects in a vodka-and-caviar induced roid rage. While this may have been a laugh riot for Stalin and his numbnuts cronies, the Finnish people obviously were a little unhappy with the prospect of having all their cross-country skis, Winter Olympics gold medals and salmon fishing boats captured by a rampaging horde of godless commie bastards, so they decided to open an extra-large can of whoop-ass and give the Russkies the ballsack kicking they were apparently looking for.

Now when you think of Finland, the phrase "military powerhouse" isn't exactly the first thing that pops into your head. Likewise, when you looked at Simo Häyhä, a slight-framed Finnish farmer who didn't stand an inch over five feet tall, you also probably didn't think "total fucking unstoppable badass". Well let's just say that first impressions can be deceiving.

Simo was a member of a Finnish organization roughly equivalent to the minutemen of the American Revolution. He had done his state-mandated one-year term in the Finnish Army, reaching the rank of corporal, and was living a peaceful life in a farming village not far from the Russian border, spending his days farming, hunting, and crushing giant logs into sawdust with his bare hands. When the Soviets crossed the border into Finland with the expressed purpose of busting Finnish heads, Simo was called up into service. He went out to the wood shed behind his house, grabbed his old-school Russian-made Mosin-Nagant M28/30 rifle and headed out to take some commies behind a proverbial woodshed of his own.

Häyhä's specialty was his knowledge of the forests, his enduring patience and his impeccable rifle marksmanship. A sniper by trade, he would dress up in all-white camouflage, sneak through the woods with only a day's worth of food and couple clips of ammunition, and then lie in wait for any Russian stupid enough to wander into his killzone. His first battle-experience came in the hard-fought Kollaa campaign, where a severely outnumbered Finnish force bore the brunt of a large-scale Russian assault. Temperatures at this time ranged from -20 to -40 degrees Celsius, and the entire forest was covered with several feet of snow. While this played havoc on the inexperienced and under-equipped Russian invaders, the Finns were right at home in it because FINLAND IS

FUCKING COLD AS SHIT ALL THE TIME and they're used to it there. Throughout this campaign, Häyhä basically just ran around doling out head-shots like the ice cream man gives out Dove bars on a hot sunny day in the Sahara desert. His personal best was fucking twenty-five kills in a single day. That's like an entire baseball team.

Throughout the Winter War (as it would come to be known), Simo Häyhä ran around being what experienced HALO players would call a "camping fag", and scoring enough kill shots to make fucking RoboCop and the Terminator hide their heads in shame. He would come to be known throughout the Russian Army as "The White Death", and at one point in the war they even went so far as to try and launch a couple of goddamned artillery strikes on locations at which they thought he might be hiding. That's desperation there - like even more desperate than a nymphomaniac babe at a convention for castrated male models.

After hearing about how much ass Häyhä was kicking out on the frozen tundra of eastern Finland with an antiquated bolt-action piece-of-shit rifle, the Finnish High Command decided to give him a special award: a custom-built Sako M2/28-30 *Sniper Rifle of Headshots +3*. He put this to good use, killing the ever-loving shit out of anyone that crossed him. On several occasions the Russians sent their own snipers to take him out, but Simo managed to win those duels every time. You see, Häyhä not only passed out long-range silent death to anyone with a red star on his hat, but he did it without the aid of a telescopic sight. He preferred to use the rifle's regular iron sights because it allowed him to present a smaller target, and because several of the commie snipers he moked out were given away by a glint of light reflecting off the lenses of their scopes. He obviously didn't want to fall to this fate, so he went balls-out and wasted assholes the old-fashioned (and unarguably the more hardcore) way.

Finally, on 2 March 1940, some Soviet bastard got a lucky shot off and popped Simo Häyhä in the jaw with an explosive bullet. Häyhä fell into a coma and was pulled off the field by his comerades. He would finally awake eleven days later, on the same day that the Winter War ended. He would go on to live to the ripe old age of 97.

The Winter War ended as a victory for Finland. The Red Army captured a mere 22,000 square miles of territory and lost close to one million men, more than forty times the number of Finnish casualties. Simo Häyhä received five medals for valour, including the prestigious Kollaa Cross, and was express-promoted from corporal to second lieutenant. Throughout the war, Häyhä raked in a total of 505 confirmed sniper kills (in some sources he is credited with 542). On top of this, he also mowed down two hundred men with a Suomi 9mm submachine gun, bringing his total kill count to over 700 men in under 100 days.

Nobody in history has ever been credited with more confirmed kills than Simo Häyhä. He was an unlikely war hero who used patience, cunning and precision to defend his country, his home, his people and his freedom from communist totalitarian oppression. He was an unstoppable killing machine the likes of which the world has never known before or since.

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Drunk power boss 'causes blackout'

11 November 2014 bbc.com

Last updated at 05:41 ET

Power station towers

A drunk power station boss plunged a county into darkness after a bar brawl in eastern China, it's reported.

Power was cut to thousands of homes and businesses for six hours in part of Henan province, after a group of power plant employees took issue with staff at a local karaoke joint, the South China Morning Post website reports. The group reportedly smashed up the bar after being refused a free round of drinks. During the melee, one of the officials threatened to "unleash the wrath of the electric tiger", as the state electricity system is known, by cutting the bar's power. They had already enjoyed crates of beer and "several bottles of expensive liquor" during their jaunt, the report says.

Bar staff say they heard one of the men, who said he was the power plant's boss, on the phone asking for the plant to be shut down for repairs. A few minutes later, "half a county was plunged into darkness", the website says. State-owned Hebi City Electricity Supply Company has since apologised for the incident, saying it would learn "profound lessons". The plant's manager has been sacked and another member of staff suspended for two years, the company says, along with fines and warnings for the other brawlers.

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Man's 71-year-old banknote rejected

19 November 2014 bbc.com

Last updated at 11:16 ET

The 500-yuan banknote

The note is now a collector's item, but no use for train travel.

An elderly man in China has tried to buy a train ticket using currency not in circulation since 1949, it's reported.

The 80-year-old man handed the 500-yuan note to a ticket seller at a train station in Yongkang, eastern Zhejiang Province, the Global Times website reports. The note is almost as old as its owner; it was printed in 1943 under the Republic of China and features the face of the country's founder and first president, Sun Yat-sen. It has been obsolete since the People's Republic of China was founded in 1949. But the man, identified as Mr Ying, was reportedly adamant that the note should be accepted, asking: "It's a 500-yuan bill! Why did the seller refuse to take it?" Mr Ying was trying to pay for a train ticket costing 12.5 yuan ($2; £1.30). But rather than pocketing a heap of change, he was informed his note is no longer legal tender.

While the note wasn't much use at the station, it could still prove valuable to Mr Ying. Currency from the era is now considered a collector's item, and some 500-yuan notes are being sold on internet auction sites for more than $100 (£64).

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Clashes at Dutch Black Pete protest

15 November 2014

bbc.com

Members of the police and demonstrators clash during anti-Black Pete demonstration, Gouda, The Netherlands, 15 November 2014

Most of those arrested were held for refusing to move to a designated protest site

- Black Pete is 'negative stereotype'
- Is it always racist to black up your face?
- Dutch 'Black Pete' figure criticised Watch

Dutch police have arrested dozens of people during a protest over Black Pete, a controversial black-faced sidekick to the local St Nicholas.

The police said most of the 90 people were arrested for protesting in a non-designated area in the city of Gouda.

Many in the Netherlands see Black Pete as a racial stereotype, but others say the tradition is not linked to race.

The Dutch version of the St Nicholas legend depicts him arriving by boat from Spain with armies of Black Petes.

Trouble broke out in Gouda, selected as the city to kick off this year's festivities, during a re-enactment of the arrival of Nicholas and his Black Petes.

State TV showed footage of scuffles as protesters unfurled banners reading "Black Pete is racism".

The traditional festival is causing increasing controversy in the Netherlands

Dutch police form a line around a protest against Black Pete, Gouda, The Netherlands, 15 November 2014

The Gouda authorities introduced other coloured Petes, including a Cheese Pete, this year

Police said protesters had been forbidden from demonstrating at the re-enactment, but refused to move away.

The Black Pete character is causing mounting controversy in the Netherlands.

Traditional and a new style "Cheese Pete, right, take part in the parade for the arrival of Saint Nicholas in Gouda, Netherlands, Saturday, Nov 15

Last year, hundreds of people staged a protest in Amsterdam.

Earlier this year, Amsterdam's regional court said the image of Black Pete "with his thick red lips, being a stupid servant, gives rise to a negative stereotyping of black people".

The court ordered Amsterdam's authorities to review the festival.

Actors dressed as Saint Nicolas, left, and Black Pete greet children in Antwerp, Belgium on Saturday Nov 15

Black Petes also appear during festivities in Belgium

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Iraqi army 'had 50,000 ghost troops'

30 November 2014 bbc.com

An investigation into corruption in the Iraqi army has revealed that there were 50,000 false names on its payroll.

Known in the military as "ghost soldiers", they either did not exist or no longer reported for duty, however their salaries were still paid.

A statement from the PM's office said the payments have been stopped.

Correspondents say rampant corruption in the Iraqi army is seen as one of the reasons why it has struggled to contain Islamic State militants.

A spokesman for Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi, quoted by AFP news agency, said the investigation began when the latest salary payments were made.

"Over the past few weeks, the prime minister has been cracking down to expose the ghost soldiers and get to the root of the problem," said Rafid Jaboori.

It is thought that the salaries were siphoned off by corrupt officers.

An unnamed officer told AFP that the 50,000 names include soldiers who had deserted or were killed in recent fighting.

The US has spent billions of dollars trying to build up the Iraqi army.

But security forces were caught by surprise by an IS offensive last summer and lost huge swathes of territory in northern and western Iraq.

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Monsieur Romieu - a 'man of talents'

21 November 2014

bbc.com

Alexandre Romieu

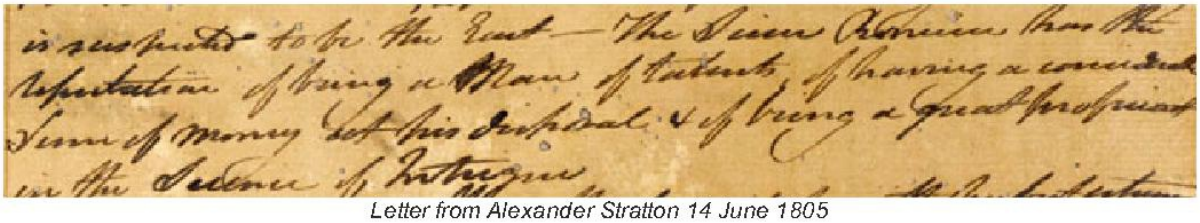
At a time of international conflict two centuries ago, did Britain assassinate an enemy agent while the world was looking the other way? Matthew Teller delves into a story of intrigue and possible skulduggery in Persia.

September 1805. Britain and France are at war. Napoleon is massing an army at Boulogne, ready to invade England. Nelson harries the French fleet in the Mediterranean.

Amid the tension, a letter lands on the desk of William Bruce, Britain's Resident in Bushire, on the Persian Gulf.

"There is a French officer of the name of Romieu, whose destination is suspected to be the East," it warns.

"Romieu has the reputation of being a man of talents, of having a considerable sum of money at his disposal, and of being a great proficient in the science of intrigue."



Letter from Alexander Stratton 14 June 1805

Middle of top line: The Sieur Romieu has the reputation of being a man of talents...

The letter, written by Alexander Stratton, British ambassador in Constantinople, had been forwarded to Bruce by Harford Jones, a British official in Baghdad.

It was dated 14 June, three months earlier. In the same delivery, Jones had included another despatch dated 25 July - Romieu had been spotted in Aleppo changing money into gold, with the intention of making his way to Persia.

Round the Bend

Bruce acted fast. The next day he wrote to his subordinate in Muscat, alerting him to Romieu's presence, and sent word to ports all along the Gulf to keep watch.

Who was Romieu? What was he up to?

Antoine-Alexandre Romieu was an adventurer. He had been an army officer and then a junior diplomat in Corfu - and in 1804, aged 40, he had returned to Paris to seek a more challenging role, writes David Vinson of Montpellier University.

Map of the Gulf

He obviously made an impression. Napoleon told his foreign minister, Talleyrand, to send Romieu to Persia, to "learn its situation and its strength", and added: "I want to make an alliance with the Shah."

Napoleon was not only fighting Britain. He was also facing the Russians and the Austrians, and his invasion of Egypt had caused a rift with Ottoman Turkey. Persia would have been a useful ally - a bulwark against Russian power, and a bridgehead from which to attack British interests in India.

Romieu arrived in Constantinople on 20 May, setting off alarm bells among the British - and a tide of diplomatic correspondence, including the letters to Bruce.

But by the time the letters reached Bruce on 27 September it was already too late.

Romieu had arrived in Tehran two days previously, having successfully evaded an assassin, hired - the French alleged - by Britain's consul in Aleppo. Britain rejected the accusation, and a diplomatic row ensued.

Meanwhile on 30 September, Romieu was granted an audience with the Shah, Fat'h Ali, who received the idea of forming an alliance against Russia favourably.

Shah Fat'h Ali

But then Romieu suddenly took sick. After "constantly vomiting for three days and suffering from shivers and great heat," he died, writes historian Iradj Amini.

Almost immediately, rumours began to circulate that he had been poisoned.

The French accused the British ambassador. Britain denied involvement. Fat'h Ali buried Romieu with the case unresolved.

Less than 10 days later, the British fleet under Nelson defeated the French and Spanish at Trafalgar.

France and Persia signed their alliance on 4 May 1807, but it came to nothing - within weeks, Napoleon had joined with Russia to attack Britain closer to home.

Nineteenth-century French travellers reported visiting Romieu's domed mausoleum in Tehran. But the reports peter out. Today, nobody is sure where the "man of talents" lies.

British Library curator Martin Woodward contributed original research for this article. Click here to see the originals of documents referred to above:

Copy of letter from Alexander Stratton to Harford Jones, 14 June 1805. Penultimate line: "…a French officer of the name of Romieu…"

Copy of letter from Alexander Stratton to Harford Jones, 14 June 1805. First paragraph: "…a man of talents…"

Copy of letter from Harford Jones to William Bruce, 9 September 1805. Top: "There is now but little doubt that the Sieur [Monsieur] Romieu has struck off for Persia…" Middle: "His person is of the middling size…"

Round the Bend *is a series of tales from the days when Britain ruled India and the Gulf, told with documents newly digitised by the British Library. You can* explore the archive yourself.

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Mormon founder 'had up to 40 wives'

12November2014 bbc.com

Portraits of Joseph and Emma Smith

The Mormon church has said for the first time that its founder Joseph Smith had up to 40 wives.

In an essay published on its website quoting "careful estimates", the church said the wives included a 14-year-old and others who were already married.

The Mormon church banned polygamy in 1890 and now excommunicates anyone who practises it.

The church has previously sought to portray Smith as loyal to his first wife Emma.

However, this is not the first time that the church has admitted his polygamy, as previously reported here.

The essay, entitled Plural Marriage in Kirtland and Nauvoo, said: "Joseph married many additional wives and authorised other Latter-day Saints to practise plural marriage."

It said "plural marriage was difficult for all involved"; for Emma it was an "excruciating ordeal".

Mormon practices

- No longer allows polygamy and the church excommunicates anyone who practises it
- Do not smoke or drink alcohol
- Tea and coffee also forbidden
- Give 10% of earnings to church
- Homosexual sex forbidden
- Parishes called wards or congregation
- Women cannot be priests, but can work as missionaries

Multiple marriage and the Mormons

Most of the women were aged between 20 and 40 when Smith married them, the essay added.

The youngest was Helen Mar Kimball, a daughter of two close friends, who he married "several months before her 15th birthday".

It is likely Joseph Smith - who is considered a prophet - did not have sexual relations with all of his wives, as some were "sealed" to him only for the next life, according to the essay.

A file photo shows women walk past a statue of Joseph and Emma Smith outside the church office building for The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City, Utah, in 2012

A statue of Joseph and Emma Smith stands in Salt Lake City

The Utah-based Mormon religion, officially known as the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, boasts more than 15 million members worldwide.

Polygamy was widely practised by men in the church from the mid-to-late 19th Century, but the revelations about Joseph Smith have shocked followers.

Emily Jensen, a blogger and editor in Farmington, Utah, told the New York Times that members had been saying on social media: "This is not the church I grew up with, this is not the Joseph Smith I love."

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS)

- Mormons follow 13 key articles of faith - including a belief that Zion (the New Jerusalem) will be built on the American continent
- Mormons believe that God has a physical body, is married, and can have children
- Followers also believe that human beings can become like gods
- Those completing the Temple Endowment Ritual can wear the temple garment - a special type of white underwear worn day and night

What do Mormons believe?

While the practice of polygamy was dropped in 1890, the concept remains in the afterlife. A man can be married or "sealed" to more than one woman after death, but not the other way around.

Church leaders reportedly said the essay was part of an attempt to be truthful and transparent with followers.

It is among a series of essays posted on the Mormon church's website in the past year.

They address topics such as the ban on black men from the priesthood, which was lifted in 1978, and accounts of how Smith translated the Book of Mormon, the church's sacred scripture.

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Extinct giant penguin found in shed

28 November 2014 bbc.com

Last updated at 06:03 ET

Emperor penguins in a Japanese zoo watch a man in a penguin suit

The new species would have been taller than today's Emperor penguins (right)

A giant penguin that would have towered above today's largest species has been discovered in a New Zealand university's storage shed, it's been reported.

The fossilised bones of the as-yet unnamed bird had remained in storage at Auckland University since 1971, until the advent of 3D printing helped experts confirm that it was "almost certainly" a new type of giant penguin, Radio New Zealand International reports. The new technology meant that Dr Daniel Thomas was able to scan the bones to an American palaeontologist, and they were able to determine the bird would have stood at least 30cm taller than an emperor penguin, and taller than the extinct Kairuku penguin, whose remains were identified in 2012. "I imagine an emperor would have run away scared," Dr Thomas said, pointing out that he was still unsure if the 4ft 3in (1.3m) specimen was a juvenile or an adult.

The New Zealand Herald said that the new species was the first of its kind to be found on North Island, and the specimen dates back 28 million years to a time when New Zealand was largely underwater. The storage shed at the university may still yield other discoveries, Dr Thomas said. "It turned out there was a raft of other specimens as well - it was a treasure trove of some really incredible stuff," he told the paper.

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'Police reindeer' option for Arctic

18 November 2014 bbc.com

Last updated at 07:09 ET

Nenet reindeer herders on the remote Yamal Peninsula in Northern Siberia

Reindeer territory: You probably wouldn't want a snowmobile to break down in northern Siberia

Reindeer could soon be patrolling alongside police officers in Russia's far north, it's been reported.

The move is being considered in the Yamalo-Nenets region of northwest Siberia, as a way to help police maintain law and order in the difficult terrain, the Izvestia newspaper reports. The region is in Russia's Arctic tundra, where the land is almost always frozen. While the local police are equipped with snowmobiles, it seems furry transportation can sometimes be more reliable. "Of course we have snowmobiles in service, but one should understand that a machine is a machine," Irina Pimkina from the region's Interior Ministry tells the paper. "A snowmobile can break down or get stuck in the tundra, but the deer will run at all times." Police sometimes struggle to locate suspects who escape into the tundra using their own reindeer, a source tells Izvestia, and officers can also find it difficult to transport people back to the police station. It's hoped the reindeer would make matters easier.

Russia's Defence Ministry already has about 150 donkeys and mules serving in special mountain brigades, and has legislation in place to allow reindeer to be added to the mix. According to the Russia Today website, they would have company over the border in Finland, where police use the animals to - appropriately - patrol the forests of Lapland.

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Passengers 'push frozen plane'

26 November 2014

bbc.com

Last updated at 06:32 ET

The passengers pushing the plane

Homeward bound: Frozen brake pads were no match for these passengers

Passengers due to take a flight in Siberia had to get out and push the aircraft after its brake pads froze solid, it's reported.

The plane was trying to take off from the Russian town of Igarka, but was unable to move after the temperature fell to -52C, the RIA Novosti news agency reports. Passengers on board the flight, many of them shift workers, apparently offered to lend a hand, fearing that otherwise their journey home would be delayed, The Siberian Times reports. The Katekavia airline flight later took off and landed safely in the city of Krasnoyarsk. "According to the initial account, the air temperature dropped to -52C, and the braking system in the plane's landing gear froze in the parking position," Oxana Gorbunova, a senior aide at the Western Siberia state transport prosecutor's office, tells RIA Novosti. "The pushback tractor was unable to budge the aircraft onto the taxiway, and the passengers decided to help give it a push, which is not permitted, as this can damage the aircraft skin." Prosecutors are now checking whether the airport, the airline, the crew or the passengers broke any air safety laws.

Igarka lies 100 miles (160km) north of the Arctic Circle, so chilly winter temperatures are not unusual. But -52C is significantly colder than normal; the average low temperature is closer to -30C. Igarka's airport is a regional airline hub used by 100,000 passengers a year, many of them working in Russia's Arctic oil and gas fields.

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The disabled children locked up in cages

13 November 2014

bbc.com

A child in a cage, photographed at the centre in 2008

A photograph from 2008 shows how children are put in cages

Disabled people in Greece are often stigmatised and can struggle to get the support they need. Some disabled children who live in a state-run home are locked up in cages - staff say they want to improve conditions but money is short.

Nine-year-old Jenny stands and rocks backwards and forwards, staring through the bars of a wooden cage.

When the door is unlocked she jumps down on to the stone floor and wraps her arms tightly around the nurse. But a few minutes later she allows herself to be locked back in again without a fuss.

She is used to her cage. It's been her home since she was two years old.

Jenny, who has been diagnosed with autism, lives in a state-run institution for disabled children in Lechaina, a small town in the south of Greece, along with more than 60 others, many of whom are locked in cells or cages.

Fotis, who is in his twenties and has Down's syndrome, sleeps in a small cell separated from the other residents by ceiling-high wooden bars and a locked gate. His cell is furnished only with a single bed. There are no personal possessions in sight anywhere in the centre.

"Are we going on a trip?" is this wiry young man's hopeful refrain whenever he sees anyone new. But with barely six members of staff caring for more than 65 residents there is rarely an opportunity to leave the centre.

Some of the wooden partitions have been painted in bright colours

In the small staff room, an array of closed circuit TV screens flicker, permanently tuned into

A caged bed and wooden bars separating a section of a room - some of the wood has been painted

the large wooden boxes that dominate the upstairs rooms.

The poor conditions first came to the attention of the authorities five years ago when a group of European graduates spent several months at the centre as volunteers.

Catarina Neves, a Portuguese psychology graduate was among them.

Find out more

- Chloe Hadjimatheou's report can be heard on World Update on the BBC World Service from 10:00 GMT on Friday 14 November

- More from World Update
- More from the BBC World Service

"On the first day there I was completely shocked… I could never have imagined that we would have this situation in a modern European country but I was even more surprised that the staff were behaving like it was normal," she says.

The volunteers wrote up their experiences in a document that they sent to politicians, European Union officials, and every human rights and disability rights organisation they could find. Occasionally they received replies thanking them for their email without any promise of action but mostly they were ignored.

Then in 2010 the volunteers' testimony came to the attention of the Greek ombudsman for the rights of the child who visited the centre and published a damning report in which he highlighted, "the degrading living conditions… the deprivation of care and support provided, the use of sedating medication, children being strapped to their beds, the use of wooden cage-beds for children with learning disabilities, the electronic surveillance, as well as the fact that such practices constitute violations of human rights."

He also referred to the fact that there had been several deaths at the centre due to a lack of supervision. A 15-year-old died in 2006 after choking on an object he had accidentally swallowed. Ten months later when a 16-year-old died, the post-mortem examination revealed his stomach was full of pieces of fabric, thread and bandages.

The residents, shown here in 2008, have no personal belongings in the home

Wooden bars separate part of a room - a person lies behind the bars and a woman puts a cover over someone lying on a bed, 2008

It was after these incidents that management of the centre decided that the staffing levels made it impossible to protect the children from harm. Their solution was to have the cages custom built for the residents.

However the ombudsman's report concluded that the cages and any practices employing long-term restraints "are clearly illegal and are in direct contradiction with the obligation for respect and protection of the human rights of the residents," and he urged the Greek government to take immediate steps to rectify the situation.

But after almost five years the only changes are superficial.

Some of the wooden bars have been painted and funding was found to turn the day room into a soft-play area - but there is still no-one to engage with the residents, who sit alone in the room on plastic mats rocking and staring at the walls while an assistant watches from the doorway.

There is only one nurse and one assistant per floor responsible for more than 20 residents - there is no permanent doctor at the centre.

When residents need to go to hospital, they are accompanied by one of the nurses which means more than 20 residents are left in the care of just one person.

A person being fed through the bars of a caged bed, this photograph taken in 2008

A child being fed through the bars of his bed in 2008

"On a nightshift I was often left alone with three assistants, who are not even nurses, to care for more than 60 patients. If there were any medical problems with the children there was no one to ask for help except God," says a senior nurse who recently retired from the centre and spoke to the BBC on condition of anonymity.

She says the cages were necessary. "We fought to have those caged beds built to give the children more freedom. Before that the residents were permanently tied by

their arms and legs to their beds.

"Anyway, the children are used to them now. They like them."

Local doctor George Gotis who has been volunteering his services at the centre for more than two decades also sees the cages in a positive light.

"I believe this is one of the best institutions for disabled children not only Greece but in Europe," he says.

"Many of these profoundly disabled children have lasted far beyond their average life expectancy and these expensive caged beds, which were built to help protect them from injuring themselves, have played a big role in that."

The new director of the centre Gina Tsoukala, who has not been paid for nearly a year, says she can't quit because she feels she owes it to the residents to stay and fight their cause.

"Obviously we shouldn't have cages here but it is impossible for us to manage without them when we have such low levels of staff."

"Some of the residents have self-destructive tendencies or are quarrelsome and so on the advice of a doctor we have to use these wooden partitions. But the children are still free to communicate and to some degree to interact with each other."

Gina Tsoukala

Gina Tsoukala, director of the centre

At lunchtime the children who are behind bars are fed inside their cages.

The director says only the very basic needs of the children can be covered by her staff. In one shift a nurse and assistant have to change the nappies of more than 20 residents, hose them down, spoon feed them and medicate them.

"We are doing everything we can but we do not have the resources to give anything else," says Tsoukala.

"More than two thirds of these children have been abandoned by their families and we do not have the time to give them the emotional support we would like, nor to give them the individual care they deserve."

But arguing that the cages are there for the safety of the children is wrong, says Steven Allen, of The Mental Disability Advocacy Center (MDAC) - an international human rights organisation for people with mental disabilities.

"The cages are there to protect the staff not the children," he says. "They are based on a model of care that is about coercion, restriction and making people with disabilities easy to manage, not treating them as human beings with rights.

"Being kept in a cage is seriously detrimental to the psychological health of patients, has no therapeutic value and can actually be physically dangerous. There have been cases [elsewhere] where the bars of cages have fallen on to patients and killed them," he says.

The MDAC says the only other countries which currently use similar caged beds are the Czech Republic and Romania.

The head of the Association for Families and People with Disabilities in Ilia, the local prefecture, Ioannis Papadatos, has his office in a huge state of the art centre designed to cater for people with disabilities.

Ioannis Papadatos and his son Andonis at the purpose-built centre for people with disabilities that was closed down

Ioannis Papadatos with his son at a deserted centre for people with disabilities

Complete with swimming pool, physiotherapy and speech therapy facilities, and a large number of flats for semi-independent living, it was built with EU funds. But today it sits empty because the Greek state can't afford to staff it.

Ioannis Papadatos used to be on the board of trustees for the children's centre at Lechaina until last year. He says he battled to make conditions better at the centre - two girls with autism now go to a special school for a few hours a day.

But for many residents he says, "The only time they will really be released is when they die."

This is a subject close to his heart. His first child, 24-year-old Andonis, was born with Down's syndrome.

Andonis has visited the centre with his father and seen people with similar conditions to his own living behind bars. When asked about it he visibly shivers.

"Oh, don't talk about it! It gives me the chills," he says.

Sociable and confident, Andonis is unusual in that he was raised by parents who were proud of him and encouraged him to live as independent a life as possible, in a country where disability is still stigmatised.

Gina Tsoukala says the mothers of some of the residents do not even know of their

Andonis

existence. She believes that in some cases, when disabled children were born, the father and hospital conspired to tell the mother the baby had died.

There are about a dozen centres for disabled children and adults in Greece but getting access to them is difficult and it is unclear what conditions are like inside each of them. The BBC's requests to visit other institutions in Athens and Sidirokastro, in the north of Greece were refused.

But there are plans to improve the institution at Lechaina and other similar homes, says Efi Bekou, the general secretary in charge of welfare at the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare

"At the moment there are 12 centres for disabled children and adults around Greece but we are opening increasing numbers of homes in the community and hope to eventually close all big institutions."

She says the economic crisis means that the Greek state is bound to rules set by its lenders in the EU and IMF, including a moratorium on hiring new staff - as a result, she says, it would be impossible to employ the number of staff needed at the centre.

But while she says the government is discussing the children's situation she admits, "I can't give you an exact time line for when those children will be transferred out of that institution."

The names of the children in this article have been changed.

Chloe Hadjimatheou's report can be heard on World Update *on the BBC World Service from 10:00 GMT on Friday 14 November.*

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The story of the 'most complicated' watch in the world

11 November 2014

bbc.com

Back and front of the watch

The most complicated handmade watch, the Henry Graves Supercomplication, has been sold at auction for 20.6m Swiss francs (£13.4m), writes Luke Jones.

A "complication" is a technical term referring to any feature on a watch which is in addition to simply telling the time - and Henry Graves Jr wanted more than anyone else.

The Supercomplication, made by Patek Philippe in 1932, has 24 of them including Westminster chimes, a perpetual calendar, sunrise and sunset times, and a celestial map of New York as seen from Graves's apartment on Fifth Avenue.

But for a "very flamboyant time he was a strangely quiet man", says Stacy Perman, author of A Grand Complication. His father was a "figure of the gilded age of American finance", but Graves was more a man of leisure. He was a banker, but not "nine to five", notes Perman.

This was the tail end of the "golden age of watchmakers". "Until the advent of the automobile they were considered the most innovative makers in the world," Perman explains.

Graves was an "incredibly keen" sportsman, which may have drawn him to the increasingly competitive field of watchmaking. The Geneva Observatory Timing contest, the "watch Olympics" as Perman calls it, pitted timepieces against each other for prizes and Graves took a close interest in it.

Graves' Celestial map

Supercomplication celestial

- Shows the night sky as seen from Graves's flat by Central Park in New York City
- Maps the correct spacing and magnitude of the stars
- The map rotates with the sky

Source: Sotheby's

The Supercomplication was part of an "unofficial competition" with the automotive pioneer James Packard, says Daryn Schnipper, chairman of Sotheby's watch division.

Labels for watch

A man of "self-made wealth", Packard was fascinated with complicated watches and had an edge on Graves because of his "engineering mind", says Perman.

The Packard watch, with 10 complications, had been the "piece de resistance". It featured the first sky chart ever on a watch - a celestial map of the sky above his home in Ohio made with 500 gold stars.

Graves commissioned the Supercomplication watch in order to beat Packard's.

It was commissioned in 1925 but was not delivered to him until 1933. It has 900 parts and remains the most complicated watch built without the assistance of computers, according to Sotheby's. One of its functions shows sidereal time, which is based on the amount of time it takes the Earth to make two consecutive transitions of a meridian by a fixed star. A sidereal day is approximately 23 hours, 56 minutes and 4.1 seconds.

At an auction in 1999 it sold for $11m (£9.6m).

It was last wound in 1969. And it's still working.

- The "Grande sonnerie" (Westminster chimes) with carillon
- The "Petite sonnerie" with carillon
- The minute-repeater

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The teenage soldiers of World War One

10November2014

bbc.com

As many as 250,000 boys under the age of 18 served in the British Army during World War One. Fergal Keane remembers the sacrifice they made.

War confers many things on boys who pick up a weapon to fight. They learn the true meaning of fear. They test their own capacity for courage and the limits of human endurance, physical and mental.

Some find that killing comes easily to them, too easily. And others recoil from acts of blood.

But what unites all teenage warriors is the speed with which they are hurled into a place of maiming and death.

Describing the training of a boy soldier in World War One, Wilfred Owen, wrote in Arms and the Boy:

Let the boy try along this bayonet-blade

How cold steel is, and keen with hunger of blood;

Fergal Keane

Blue with all malice, like a madman's flash;

And thinly drawn with famishing for flesh.

Lend him to stroke these blind, blunt bullet-heads

Which long to muzzle in the hearts of lads.

Or give him cartridges of fine zinc teeth,

Sharp with the sharpness of grief and death.

From Homer's Iliad to the present day the stories of boy soldiers evoke a particular sadness, resonant as they are of the destruction of youth and possibility.

But at the outbreak of the Great War there was nothing to suggest that the tens of thousands of boy volunteers were about to join a long, doomed procession.

Nearly 250,000 teenagers would join the call to fight. The motives varied and often overlapped - many were gripped by patriotic fervour, sought escape from grim conditions at home or wanted adventure.

After being wounded on the battlefield it took Cyril Jose two days to crawl back to the British lines

Technically the boys had to be 19 to fight but the law did not prevent 14-year-olds and upwards from joining in droves. They responded to the Army's desperate need for troops and recruiting sergeants were often less than scrupulous.

"It was obvious they weren't 19," says historian Richard Van Emden, "but you'd have a queue of men going down the road, you're getting a bounty for every one who joins up, are you really going to argue the toss with a young lad who's enthusiastic, who's keen as mustard to go, who looks maybe pretty fit, pretty well. Let's take him."

Fifteen-year-old Cyril Jose was a tin-miner's son from Cornwall. With the region suffering from heavy unemployment, the boy with a strong sense of adventure joined up. From his training camp he wrote an excited letter to his sister:

"Dearest Ivy, stand back. I've got my own rifle and bayonet. The bayonet's about 2ft long from hilt to end of point. Must feel a bit rummy to run into one of them in a charge. Not 'arf. Goodbye and God bless you, from your fit brother, Cyril."

Cyril survived the war but the bloodshed he witnessed in France turned him into a vehement opponent of militarism for the rest of his life. In one letter home he poured scorn on the British commander, Field Marshal Earl Haig.

"What brains Earl Douglas must have. Made me laugh when I read his dispatch. 'I attacked.' Old women in England picturing Sir Doug in front of the British waves brandishing his sword at Johnny in the trenches... attack Johnny from 100 miles back. I'll get a job like that in the next war."

Why did so many teenagers make it to the battlefield?

- Recruitment officers were paid two shillings and sixpence for each new army recruit, and would often ignore any concerns they had about age.
- Many people at the start of the 20th Century didn't have birth certificates, so it was easy to lie about how old you were.
- The minimum height requirement was 5ft 3in (1.60m), with a minimum chest size of 34in (0.86m). If you met these criteria you were likely to be recruited.
- Some young boys were scared of being called a coward and could not resist the pressure from society.

How did Britain let 250,000 under-age soldiers fight in WW1?

The patriotic imperative at the outbreak of war was not confined to British-born boys. For the children of migrants, rallying to the flag was proof of loyalty to their new country.

Aby Bevistein was born in Russian-occupied Poland in 1898 and came to London when he was three. In September 1914 Aby volunteered, changing his surname to the English "Harris".

Aby Bevistein's parents were heartbroken when he joined the army

Soon after his arrival in France Aby discovered the wretched nature of trench warfare. He wrote home:

"Dear mother, I've been in the trenches four times and come out safe. We're down the trenches for six days and then we get relieved for six days' rest. Dear mother, I do not like the trenches. We're going in again this week."

For Aby, and many like him, the trenches meant cold and mud, wet clothes and rats, the smell of death and the sight of mutilated flesh, long monotonous hours interrupted by terror.

On 29 December 1915 Aby was caught in a German mine explosion - the enemy had tunnelled under the trench where he was stationed. He was wounded and suffered what was then simply called "shock". In today's military lexicon it would be described as "combat stress" or "post traumatic stress disorder".

By early spring Aby was back on the front. On 12 Feb 1916 the Germans again attacked his position, this time with grenades.

> Dear mother, I'm in the trenches and I was ill so I went out, and they took me to the prison and I'm in a bit of trouble now"

Suffering from shock, Aby wandered back and forth along the British lines. He was eventually arrested and charged with desertion. His last letter home is that of a boy who seems determined to underplay his situation, not to put stress on his mother at home.

"Dear mother, I'm in the trenches and I was ill so I went out, and they took me to the prison and I'm in a bit of trouble now."

The following month Aby then aged 17, became one of the 306 British soldiers executed during the Great War.

Those who survived the trenches and came home brought memories that retained the power to haunt until the end of their lives. St John Battersby was 16 when he was severely wounded at the Battle of the Somme in July 1916.

Like all of the teenaged officers, Lieutenant St John Battersby had responsibilities far beyond his years, as his son, Anthony, recalls:

St John Battersby was first stationed near Serre in the Somme region

"There's my dad, 16-years-old, really in the war. He is responsible for 30-odd men and his decisions may result in them dying or not dying. This was it."

Three months after he was wounded, St John Battersby was back in France leading men in battle again. He could have opted to stay at home - by now the government was taking all those under 19 years of age out of the front lines. But a shortage of experienced officers meant they were allowing boys like St John Battersby to stay on if they wished.

A sense of duty compelled St John to return. Soon after coming back he was blown up by a German shell and lost his left leg. Determined to continue helping the war effort, he asked for, and was given, an administrative job in Britain.

But years later, after a fruitful life serving as a country vicar, the memories of war returned. His son Anthony remembered his father's last hours.

"In the hour or two before he died, he was on the Western Front, yelling, 'the Bosch are coming. We're going over the top now'. Right down deep on the ground floor of his memory was the Western Front."

The man facing death was once again the boy who had cheated it so many times.

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How dangerous is Devil's Helmet?

7 November 2014 bbc.com

Aconitum

A gardener died after apparently coming into contact with Aconitum, a poisonous plant known as Devil's Helmet. How dangerous is it, asks Tom Heyden.

"It's probably the most poisonous plant that people will have in their garden," says poison expert John Robertson. *Aconitum*, part of the buttercup family, goes by various nicknames depending on the exact species - Monkshood, Wolfsbane, the Queen of Poisons, or Devil's Helmet. Its reputation for death goes all the way back to the mythical Greek dog Cerberus, from whose saliva the plant supposedly grew.

The roots are its most poisonous part. If ingested, the toxicity acts quickly. "It tends to cause violent vomiting and diarrhoea - then death follows fairly quickly from heart failure," says Robertson, who edits the Poison Garden website. Most fatalities occur within a few hours, he says. The leaves are less toxic. One couple told him how they'd planted Devil's Helmet to brighten up their herb garden but received severe stomach upsets after accidentally picking some for a salad. It's unclear exactly what type of contact may have caused the recent fatality. But merely brushing the foliage is unlikely to cause harm unless someone is unusually susceptible, although absorption through the skin is possible, says Guy Barter, the Royal Horticultural Society's chief horticultural advisor. He recommends wearing gloves for gardening, whether or not there are poisonous plants around.

- The roots are extremely poisonous if eaten
- Leaves less toxic but can cause problems
- Common plant but harmful cases are rare

Aconitum is sold in almost every garden centre and many people will have it in their garden. But despite being extremely poisonous, harmful cases are very rare as few will ingest the roots. "If it were that dangerous then there would be many more cases than we see," Robertson adds.

In 2004, Canadian actor Andre Noble died after accidentally eating some on a hike. But this is unusual; *Aconitum* looks far less tempting than poison berries, says Robertson. In the past, its deadly toxins used to adorn the tips of poison arrows. And its root extracts have featured in modern murder cases. In 2010, Lakhvir Singh, the "curry poison killer", was jailed for life for lacing her former lover's curry with Indian aconite, known as the Queen of Poisons.

Why the French state has a team of UFO hunters

3 November 2014 bbc.com

An unidentified ring over Marseille

Thousands of UFO sightings are reported every year but not many countries are willing to spend money investigating them - there is just one dedicated state-run team left in Europe. Is France onto something?

You don't need a time machine when you visit the French Space Centre headquarters in Toulouse - it's already a throwback to the 1970s. Green lawns sweep on to wide boulevards with stout long rectangular office blocks on either side.

It's almost Soviet-style in the heart of southern France. There are few signs of life even though 1,500 people, most of them civil servants, work in boxy offices along narrow unappealing corridors.

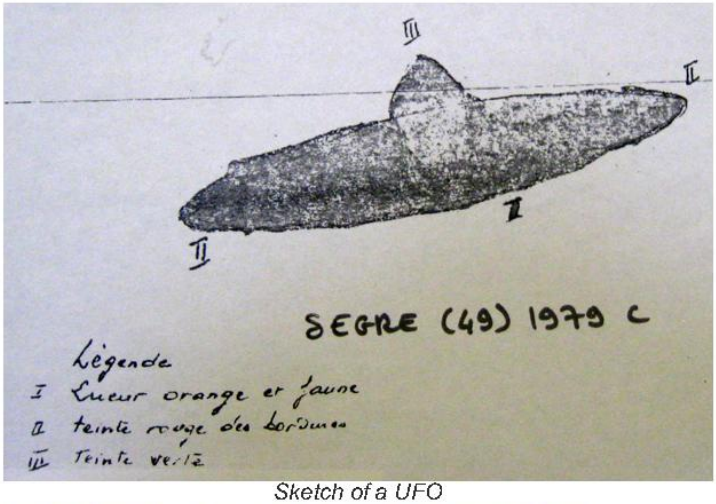
France has the biggest space agency in Europe - the result of the 1960s space race and President Charles de Gaulle's grand determination to keep France independent of the US by building its own satellites, rocket launchers and providing elite space research.

An offshoot of all that - France is the only country in Europe to maintain a full-time state-run UFO (unidentified flying objects) department. There used to be one in the UK and another in Denmark but they closed down years ago due to budget cuts.

France's UFO unit consists of four staff, and about a dozen volunteers who get their expenses paid to go on site and look into reports of strange sightings in the skies.

A drawing from the files at the French UFO department

The team is called Geipan. That's a French acronym for Study Group and Information on



Sketch of a UFO

Xavier Passot

Non-Identified Aerospace Phenomenon.

Its boss is Xavier Passot. Surrounded by dozens of books on UFOs, and stacks of documents, he tells me his mission is to be as transparent as possible about strange sightings and to follow up on each one that his team receives.

They publish their results on their website which gets 30,000 hits a month. The team receives, on average, two UFO sightings a day. The department insists an 11-page form is filled out for each one. The idea is to provide details including photographs where possible but also weed out jokers and time-wasters.

If someone claims to have seen strange lights in the skies, the UFO team might go online to see whether the observation took place on a flight path - it can trace commercial air traffic going back more than a week.

The team also has access to military flight paths and is in touch with the air force and air traffic controllers.

Sometimes if its staff are really intrigued by photos they have seen or if there have been several witnesses to the same sighting, they will call the local police to ask whether they can be considered credible.

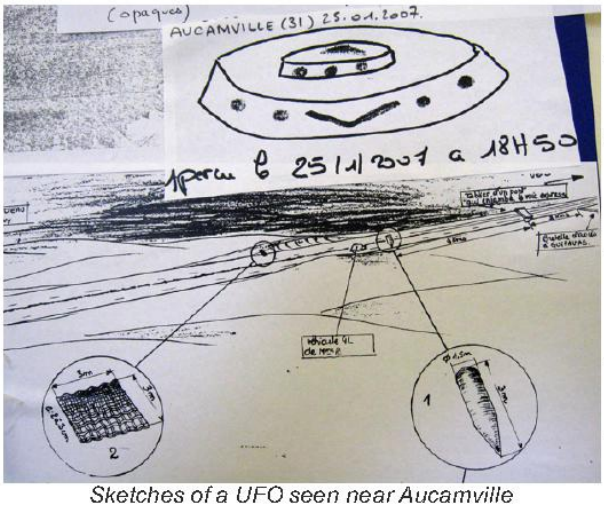
They might even check with neighbours to see whether they were out drinking that night or perhaps smoking something other than cigarettes.

Passot says many of the people who get in touch are smokers, puffing away outside bars or their own homes at night, gazing at the stars.

One of the boxy offices houses yellowing archives going back to the 1950s. The papers I look at contain eerie accounts of strange things encountered in the skies by fighter pilots on routine reconnaissance missions.

For what it's worth and for those who suspect there's conspiracy afoot, Passot tells me he has never covered up a UFO sighting.

I take a look at some amazing photos of strange lights and circular forms caught on camera. One, taken by a motorist, of a white ring shape above Marseille is particularly grabbing (the



Sketches of a UFO seen near Aucamville

image at the top of this page). But the team figured that one out - it wasn't invaders from Mars, just the reflection of a small interior overhead light in the car.

In fact, the department can explain away nearly all these phenomena and, believe it or not, the most common culprits are Chinese lanterns sent up at night during parties. The investigators often telephone the local town hall to ask if, perhaps, there had been a wedding going on at the time.

Balloons and kites floating in the skies also get mistaken for alien craft, and space debris and falling meteorites giving off strange lights are more common than one might think.

Players pointing up at the sky

Sixty years ago a football match ground to a halt when unidentified flying objects were spotted above a stadium in Florence. Did aliens come to earth? If not, what were they?

The day UFOs stopped play

But there are around 400 UFO sightings going back to the 1970s that the French team cannot explain. One, an alleged flying saucer landing near Aix-en-Provence in 1981, they take very seriously - there were landing marks and multiple witnesses.

So are there really little green men? Well, the jury's out on the colour but there are many working here, as well as others around the world, who are convinced there is some life out there.

And does the use of French taxpayers' money on UFO research make sense, particularly in these times of budgetary constraint?

That probably depends on whether you just saw an alien and, in the words of those Ghostbusters, who you gonna call?

French space centre

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Man, 80, hands in WW2 bomb to police

10 November 2014

bbc.com

An 80-year-old man caused a security alert when he handed in a mortar bomb at a south-west London police station as part of a gun amnesty.

The World War Two ordnance was taken Sutton station.

The 1940s relic sparked a partial evacuation of the building and cordons were set up in the street outside.

Earlier, the Metropolitan Police launched an amnesty designed to encourage people to hand in firearms and ammunition.

Explosives officers were called after the device was handed in at about 13:21 GMT.

'Mantelpiece ornament'

The device was declared safe about an hour later.

> We felt it was appropriate to call in the experts and get them to deal with it - in the meantime we took steps to protect our officers"

The man, from Carshalton, south-west London, walked into the police station and placed the bomb on the front counter, the Met said.

He told police the device, which belonged to his father, had been on his mantelpiece as an ornament for the past decade and he had maintained its appearance with regular cleaning.

The explosives officers described the device as a 3in 1940s mortar without a fuse or firing pin.

It may have been used for drill or training purposes, they said.

When it was brought into the police station, front counter staff were told what it was but were unable to see what it looked like or assess its condition because it was wrapped in plastic bags, the Met said.

Acting Ch Insp Andy Brittain said: "We felt it was appropriate to call in the experts and get them to deal with it - in the meantime we took steps to protect our officers, staff and members of the public."

Louisville, KY -- (WDRB) A tragedy of 170 years ago still fascinates visitors to Harrodsburg, Kentucky.

In a special Halloween edition of Bernson's Corner, Barry Bernson has the story of a life ended too soon and a mystery that persists to this day.

Once upon a time a hotel stood in central Kentucky called the Harrodsburg Springs. The historical marker and a stone wall are about all that's left to show it was here. But it was a magnificent place in 1830, a sumptuous place of joy and laughter and music.

And one day, a young woman came to stay at that hotel and that is where the story begins.

Jerry Sampson is the president of the local historical society and the owner of an antique store. For more than 180 years, he says -- the story of that mysterious visitor has been told and retold in town.

"Because at that time, a young lady -- if she could say that she danced at the Harrodsburg Springs -- her social life went through the roof, because that meant she had attained the ultimate," explains Sampson.

She had traveled here alone. From New Orleans, the other hotel guests believed. Or perhaps Tennessee. Her real name -- she wouldn't say.

Sampson says the woman really enjoyed her stay. "She charmed everyone. Had 'em wrapped around her little finger. And she danced with every man that was there at the Harrodsburg Springs."

And she was with one young man -- and said: "This is the happiest place that I've ever been, and I could stay here forever and ever."

The sun started to come up, and the last strains of the music were playing, and she said, "I am so very happy here," and as soon as she said that, she fell at his feet, dead."

The hotel staff tried for days to find family to notify but no one knew who she was.

So with heavy, sad hearts, they carried her out to the elm tree where she had said she was so happy, and that's where they buried her.

And here she lies to this day, on land that's now a town park. "Unknown," reads the marker.

As for ghost sightings?

"There have been several reports that she has made an appearance. Probably the mid-1930's was the last reported sighting of the mysterious girl who danced herself to death. And some say it happened... and some say it didn't," according to Sampson.

And some say in Harrodsburg -- when the wind starts blowing through the trees in October -- you can still faintly hear music in the air.

Where it comes from -- like the girl who's buried here -- Unknown.

Our thanks to the performers from the Stephen Foster Story in Bardstown for helping us recreate that 19th century ballroom scene.

Some say the mysterious lady was named Molly Black, the adventurous wife of a Tennessee planter. But others prefer she remain... unknown.

In Harrodsburg, Barry Bernson, Fox41 News.

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Bigfoot Attack in the Okefenokee Swamp, Georgia (1829)

A 19th Century Bigfoot Attack?
Copyright 2012 & 2014 by Dale Cox
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Last Update: June 27, 2014
http://www.exploresouthernhistory.com/okefenokeebigfoot.html

Attack in the Swamp?

In February of 1829, a story broke in U.S. newspapers of a bizarre attack by a hairy giant that left several hunters dead and missing in the Okefenokee Swamp.Thousands of alligators prove that prehistoric creatures can thrive in the Okefenokee. But could a giant hair-covered beast be among them? The great swamp is a vast place of wetlands, lakes, prairies, islands and bogs. It is mysterious and stunningly beautiful. Did a Bigfoot really attack a party of men in the Okefenokee Swamp in 1829? Or was it all a tall tale? The answer to those questions may never be known, but the story is one of many that add to the mystery of the swamp.

The tale originated near the south end of Ware County, where the line that divides Georgia from Florida passes through the Okefenokee. In 1829, the first settlers were just pushing into the fringes of the swamp. Surrounded by the stunning beauty of the swamp, they quickly picked up on an Indian legend that held a mysterious race of people lived on an island deep in the wilderness.

So far as is known, this legend first appeared in print in 1806 in Jedidiah Morse's book, Geography Made Easy. In his section on Georgia, Morse repeated a legend that a group of Indian hunters had gone into the swamp and become lost. When they were in a desperate condition, a party of the most beautiful

women they had ever seen came to their rescue:

...[They] being lost in inextricable swamps and bogs and on the point of perishing, were unexpectedly relived by a company of beautiful women, whom they call daughters of the sun, who kindly gave them such provisions as they had with them, consisting of fruit and corn cakes....

The tale as repeated by Morse continued with the women warning the hunters to flee as fast as possible to their own country, "because their husbands were fierce men and cruel to strangers." These men of the swamp were said by the Creek Indians to be of gigantic stature and both cruel and warlike. The winter of 1828-1829 was extremely dry and two men living on the edges of the swamp decided to explore as deep into it as they could. Accompanied by a boy, they went into the Okefenokee and over a course of two weeks continued to penetrate deeper and deeper into it.

As they explored the very heart of the swamp, they made a startling discovery of gigantic footprints:...The length of the foot was eighteen, and the breadth nine inches. The monster, from every appearance, must have moved forward in an easy or hesitating gait, his stride, from heel to toe, being a trifle over six feet. (Milledgeville, Georgia, Statesman January 1829, republished by the Connecticut Sentinel February 9, 1829.) The men, as newspapers of the time noted, "had seen enough." Ending their expedition and retreating out of the swamp, they related to their friends and neighbors what they had seen.

The story excited the curiosity of a party of hunters who lived just across the Florida line. Nine in number, they went into the swamp to find the mysterious giant. They were guided by one of the members of the original party:..Following, for some days, the direction of their guide, they came at length upon the track first discovered, some vestiges of which were still remaining; pursuing these traces several days longer, they came to a halt on a little eminence, and determined to pitch their camp, and refresh themselves for the day.

The expedition was described in detail in newspaper reports published in February 1829. Those accounts indicated that as the hunters were discharging their guns to reload them with fresh powder for the night, a wild animal charged their camp: ...[T]he next minute he was full in their view, advancing upon them with a terrible look and ferocious mien. Our little band instinctively gathered close in a body and presented their rifles. The huge being, nothing daunted, bounded upon his victims, and in the same instant received the contents of seven rifles.

The fight, however, did not end there:...[H]e did not fall alone, nor until he had glutted his wrath with the death of five of them, which he effected by wringing the head from the body. - Writhing and exhausted, at length he fell, with his hapless prey beneath his grasp. As the creature lay dying on the ground, writhing and sometimes roaring, the men who survived the attack gathered around it to make a closer inspection. The creature was found to measure thirteen feet from head to toe, and "his breadth and volume of just proportions."

Immediately fearful that the dying monster's cries might attract others of ts kind, the hunters fled the swamp. The men who died in the battle with the creature were left lying where they had fallen. It is a remarkable story, but could it be true? The honest answer is that no one knows. The newspaper correspondent who reported it wrote that people living in Ware County on the margins of the Okefenokee Swamp clearly believed it. Either way, the story of the 1829 attack was one of the earliest written accounts of the creature we know today as Bigfoot or Sasquatch. Sightings of some kind of a large creature in the swamp and discoveries of large footprints continue to be reported from the area to this day.

To learn about another 19th century Bigfoot sighting, be sure to read our page on the Arkansas Wild Man. Also check out our page on the 19th century capture of the Wild Man of Ocheesee Pond in Florida.

Biscuits injuring millions of Britons

Metrowebukmetro Monday 7 Sep 2009 8:30 pm

Oh crumbs – it seems up to half of all Britons have been injured… by a humble biscuit.

Flying fragments and daredevil dunking in scalding tea have all led to millions suffering at the hands of their favourite snack, according to fun research.

Among the more unusual – and daft – injuries are a man who poked himself in the eye with a biscuit and people who have fallen off chairs while reaching for a tea-time treat.

One biscuit in particular was ruled more dangerous than the rest – the custard cream, which received a risk rating of 5.63 by research company Mindlab using the newly invented Biscuit Injury Threat Evaluation (Bite). This compares with just 1.16 for the safe Jaffa Cake.

Twenty-eight per cent of Britons have choked on crumbs and ten per cent have broken a tooth biting a biccy.

'We couldn't believe the stories we heard, from people who've been bitten by their pet cat or dog while teasing them with a biscuit, to one gentleman who got stuck in wet concrete after wading in to retrieve a dropped biscuit,' said Mike Driver, marketing director for Rocky, which commissioned the research.

S. E. Schlosser

When Felix Agnus put up the life-sized shrouded bronze statue of a grieving angel, seated on a pedestal, in the Agnus family plot in the Druid Ridge Cemetery, he had no idea what he had started. The statue was a rather eerie figure by day, frozen in a moment of grief and terrible pain. At night, the figure was almost unbelievably creepy; the shroud over its head obscuring the face until you were up close to it. There was a living air about the grieving angel, as if its arms could really reach out and grab you if you weren't careful.

It didn't take long for rumors to sweep through the town and surrounding countryside. They said that the statue - nicknamed Black Aggie - was haunted by the spirit of a mistreated wife who lay beneath her feet. The statue's eyes would glow red at the stroke of midnight, and any living person who returned the statues gaze would instantly be struck blind. Any pregnant woman who passed through her shadow would miscarry. If you sat on her lap at night, the statue would come to life and crush you to death in her dark embrace. If you spoke Black Aggie's name three times at midnight in front of a dark mirror, the evil angel would appear and pull you down to hell. They also said that spirits of the dead would rise from their graves on dark nights to gather around the statue at night.

People began visiting the cemetery just to see the statue, and it was then that the local fraternity decided to make the statue of Grief part of their initiation rites. "Black Aggie" sitting, where candidates for membership had to spend the night crouched beneath the statue with their backs to the grave of General Agnus, became popular.

One dark night, two fraternity members accompanied new hopeful to the cemetery and watched while he took his place underneath the creepy statue. The clouds had obscured the moon that night, and the whole area surrounding the dark statue was filled with a sense of anger and malice. It felt as if a storm were brewing in that part of the cemetery, and to their chagrin, the two fraternity members noticed that gray shadows seemed to be clustering around the body of the frightened fraternity candidate crouching in front of the statue.

What had been a funny initiation rite suddenly took on an air of danger. One of the fraternity brothers stepped forward in alarm to call out to the initiate. As he did, the statue above the boy stirred ominously. The two fraternity brothers froze in shock as the shrouded head turned toward the new candidate. They saw the gleam of glowing red eyes beneath the concealing hood as the statue's arms reached out toward the cowering boy.

With shouts of alarm, the fraternity brothers leapt forward to rescue the new initiate. But it was too late. The initiate gave one horrified yell, and then his body disappeared into the embrace of the dark angel. The fraternity brothers skidded to a halt as the statue thoughtfully rested its glowing eyes upon them. With gasps of terror, the boys fled from the cemetery

before the statue could grab them too.

Hearing the screams, a night watchman hurried to the Agnus plot. To his chagrin, he discovered the body of a young man lying at the foot of the statue. The young man had apparently died of fright.

The disruption caused by the statue grew so acute that the Agnus family finally donated it to the Smithsonian museum in Washington D.C.. The grieving angel sat for many years in storage there, never again to plague the citizens visiting the Druid Hill Park Cemetery.

You can read more Maryland folktales and ghost stories in Spooky Maryland by S.E. Schlosser.

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Black Eyed Child 'spotted 30 years after the 'last known sighting'

Published: 2014 September 29 06:45:35 (1445 Views)

A Black Eyed Child has apparently been spotted 30 years after the 'last known sighting.'

Lee Brickley, a leading paranormal investigator, launched an in-depth investigation of Cannock Chase in Staffordshire after the reports.

Latest descriptions of the girl, who has coal-black pits for eye sockets, are identical to those chronicled in the early 1980s.

According to the Birmingham Mail, Lee, author of books about the paranormal, was stunned recently when he received a new eye-witness account of the Black Eyed Child.

Alerted by what sounded like screams, a shocked woman came across the wandering, sightless spectre while walking Birches Valley.

"We instantly started running towards the noise," she said. "We couldn't find the child anywhere and so stopped to catch our breath.

"That's when I turned round and saw a girl stood behind me, no more than 10 years old, with her hands over her eyes.

"It was as if she was waiting for a birthday cake.

"I asked if she was OK and if she had been the one screaming. She put her arms down by her side and opened her eyes.

"That's when I saw they were completely black, no iris, no white, nothing.

"I jumped back and grabbed my daughter. When I looked again, the child was gone. It was so strange."

On his paranormal website, Lee, 28 and himself from Cannock, said the woman's experience mirrors the earlier sighting.

"In the summer of 1982, my aunt was 18 years old, and she and her friends would often meet on Cannock Chase in the evening time, probably in much the same way many teenagers still do today.

"One evening, just before dark, she heard a little girl frantically shouting for help. Rushing to locate the sound, she stumbled upon a dirt track and caught sight of the girl, about six years old running in the opposite direction.

"When my aunt caught up, the girl turned around and looked her in the eyes, and then ran off

into the dark woodland. Her eyes had been completely black with no trace of white.

"There was a police search but to no avail. At the time, no-one had any reason to believe anything paranormal was going on. The girl certainly appeared to be of flesh and blood."

Apparently similar sightings have been reported around the world.

"Some people believe them to be extra-terrestrials, vampires or ghosts," said Lee.

"But there is one big difference between the sightings around the world and the stories coming out of Cannock Chase.

"Only on Cannock Chase do the sightings consistently happen during the daytime.

"In the US many reports suggest that black-eyed children often appear in groups, regularly knocking at the door of unknowing victims and asking quietly if they may come inside."

---

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Blue Baby Blue

The 'legend' of Baby Blue goes as follows:
Baby Blue was a baby, his mother (who was psychotic) murdered him. She shattered a mirror and stabbed him with one of the shards of glass. No one know what his real name was.

The legend of Blue baby blue is a lot like Bloody Mary, it takes place in a bathroom and for the 'ritual' you need a mirror.
You enter the bathroom (as with Bloody Mary, go with a friend as to not freak yourself out) and fog up the mirror. Do this however you like, turning on hot water is quite effective! When the mirror is successfully fogged, you should write "Baby Blue" in the 'fog'.
Then you should turn off the light and wait for a few moments. After a minute or two you should hold out your arms as if you were carrying a baby. You or your friend will feel like a baby has been placed in your arms. You should hold the 'baby' for a while and then pass him to the next person. WATCH OUT though, if you drop him you will receive a scratch n your arm. Drop him again and you'll get another scratch. Feeling clumsy? Drop him a third time and he'll shatter the mirror and stab you to death.
There is also another version of the story. In this version, you enter the bathroom with the lights off. You should say the phrase "Blue Baby" over and over for thirteen goes whilst pretending to rock a baby. After you finish chanting, a baby will appear and scratch you. You should drop it and run out of the bathroom as quick as you can otherwise a woman will appear and scream "GIVE ME BACK MY BABY". If you are still holding her baby then she will kill you.

All credit for the story thumbnail goes to http://joyreactor.com/post/673718 - the image is not my own and I claim no ownership of the thumbnail.

1. Anonymous8 July 2011 18:49

ahhh ome more thing that im not going to do

ReplyDelete
Replies

- Anonymous2 June 2012 05:51

I LIKE THIS STORY , BUT THERE IS NO WAY IN HELL IM DOING THIS SHIT , you already know YOLO !!!!

Delete

- Anonymous22 October 2012 03:26

ReplyDelete

34. Anonymous27 June 2013 23:45

I did this when I was little with two friends. We were in a tent instead of the bathroom. All three of us did it at the same time. After we started feeling the weight and seeing the eyes, a woman's face appeared in the wall of the tent. We got so scared the we dropped the baby. As soon as we did the tent fell in on us. And before you say the face was a parent, my mom was at work that night and my dad went to bed two hours before that.

ReplyDelete

35. Anonymous29 June 2013 21:12

Ive done it. It doesn't work ive done the whole candles and everything

ReplyDelete

36. Anonymous7 July 2013 20:39

Ummmmm..... Urban Legends are just entertainment. Y is everyone so scared?!?! Guys, quit being a pussy. ITS NOT FRICKINGGGGG REAAAAAAAL! Above it said there's no other info ab "Blue Baby" or his wacked in the head, strait jacket mommy killing him.. FOR A FACT :What mom do u know, cray cray or not, killed their sweet little one, who hasn't even been NAMED yet!?! Hello, what happened to common sense, and why in good lord pete sally is his name BLUE BABY?#?! My point exactly, Case closed :-) <3

ReplyDelete

Replies

- Anonymous7 July 2013 20:50

  Lol I posted the same comment twice on mistake >-D (laughs extra hard) its so hard to be serious when I'm not in school >-D BEST SUMMER EVERRRRR

  Delete

Reply

37. ~Beautifull-N-Talented~ D.D.D7 July 2013 20:40

Ummmmm..... Urban Legends are just entertainment. Y is everyone so scared?!?! Guys, quit being a pussy. ITS NOT FRICKINGGGGG REAAAAAAAL! Above it said there's no other info ab "Blue Baby" or his wacked in the head, strait jacket mommy killing him.. FOR A FACT :What mom do u know, cray cray or not, killed their sweet little one, who hasn't even been NAMED yet!?! Hello, what happened to common sense, and why in good lord pete sally is his name BLUE BABY?#?! My point exactly, Case closed :-) <3

ReplyDelete

Replies

- Anonymous26 April 2014 11:16

Well, actually in real life I heard about a mom killing her child while they were out for a drive. It was only a precious baby, some ppl are just twisted that way. Plus, dont call us pussies just because we're spooked out, some urban legends r real or just based on real life tragedies. Like the one with the toy baby that lures woman out from their homes. No, his name isn't blue baby, he's called that because his mother name was Daisy Blue. CASE CLOSED.

Delete

Reply

38. darkflameblood (chatlands)12 July 2013 16:13

NOBODY'S GONNA DO THIS! YOLO!
And it's totally not real. You know how many times people did Bloody Mary and it didn't work. WHY DON'T YOU PEOPLE WHO MAKE UP THESE CRAPPY STORIES DO IT!!!??? SEE HOW FUNNY IT IS!

ReplyDelete

Replies

- Kaykiie12 July 2013 19:36

Actually I have done this, being 23 years old and being a massive horror fan I would be a bit of a hypocrite if I hadn't tried now wouldn't I?

Delete

Reply

39. Anonymous16 July 2013 17:10

This is fucking crap. basically bullshit. no way i would believe that shit i dont belive in fucking blue baby blue who would!

ReplyDelete

Replies

- Anonymous1 August 2013 00:57

- then try it if you don't believe it!

Delete

Reply

40. Anonymous24 July 2013 12:05

What are we going to do if we want to get out of the bathroom
(First Version)

ReplyDelete

41. Anonymous13 August 2013 08:26

I don't believe in it!!

ReplyDelete

42. Anonymous13 August 2013 17:24

these things aren't good,I mean for gods sake your summoning demons,these things properly aren't real but better safe than sorry

ReplyDelete

43. Anonymous13 August 2013 17:33

Bloody Mary isn't real,your brain has this neat trick,if you stare at something for too long it changes it as not to record the same information,stare at your reflection for that length of time and it'll appear you have scars or whatever.

ReplyDelete

44. ash16 December 2013 14:15

its very furry but m not gonna do this

ReplyDelete

45. athena 56013 February 2014 18:05

Ok. now I've heard everything. I'm a wiccan/pagan witch who's been practicing the real life magickal arts for over 20 years now, and I deal with the spirit realm all the time, and I have to say that this is one legend that is basically just that, a legend that probably bgot started way back in the day by somebody seeking their 15 minutes of fame. Unlike the bloody marry legend witch is very well documented and that I've successfully tried myself with a small group of my family members and had gotten some very satisfactory yet surprising results. This is not say that this woman and her child never existed and or such a murder didn't or never could happen. Let's face it people there are some very sick and disturbed individuals out there in the world. At some point I'm going to try this ritual alone but I'm going to be smart about it and have protective magick circle around me first just in case this is for real and there's real danger involved and see what happens. I'm kind of the experimental type and a magick circle is what I would suggest for anyone who wants to try this in the future because I kid you not, the realm of the supernatural can truly be a very dangerous place.

ReplyDelete

Replies

- Anonymous26 February 2014 09:49

  Did you try it? I personally don't believe in magic and think you people are just fruitcakes

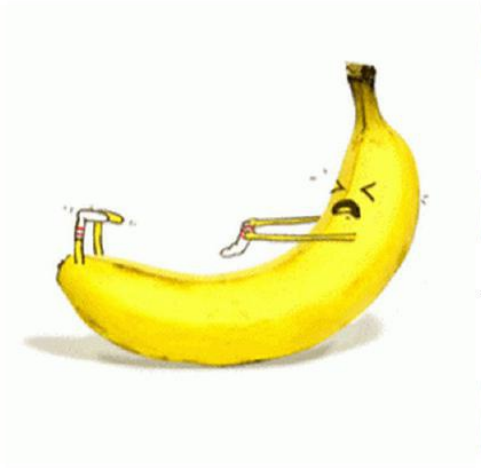
  Delete

Reply

46. Jeff day23 April 2014 12:03

jshd

ReplyDelete



47. Anonymous23 April 2014 12:05

Fuck Fuck Fuck Fuck Fuck Fuck

ReplyDelete

48. Anonymous23 April 2014 12:06

This is fucking scary i tried it and it fucking worked

ReplyDelete

49. Anonymous23 April 2014 12:07

i agree

ReplyDelete

50. Kenneth alexander27 April 2014 05:16

Fake tried it bull crap

ReplyDelete

51. Anonymous22 May 2014 02:05

Lie

ReplyDelete

52. Anonymous28 June 2014 19:00

X.X

ReplyDelete

53. Anonymous2 July 2014 00:21

Omg :(i want to try it BUTT i dont wanna get killed by the freaking careless stupid mother, And, Why did she kill her baby, and why does she want it back?

ReplyDelete

54. Anonymous5 August 2014 15:06

Fake

ReplyDelete

55. Anonymous21 August 2014 13:45

Lol you people need help, this is as fake as it gets. If that happened the innocent baby would of gone to the clouds and would not be evil. so I just disproved your stupid meth head story

ReplyDelete

56. Anonymous22 August 2014 13:48

I tried this last night,and it worked the mother appeared asking for her baby, but I told the psycho bitch she is a horrible mother and does not deserve deserve a baby. She started crying and walked away. I then gave to baby to child services.

ReplyDelete

57. Anonymous20 September 2014 02:16

when i forget these stories im floping going to celebrate but i think i wont remember to celebrate then i will remember the bad story.

ReplyDelete

58. Anonymous20 September 2014 02:22

oh that is such i lie man this is sooooo fake and who comes up with this stuff, even if this story was real the mother wouldnt cry and just go away like what the hell and you cant even proove this because i bet you dont even have the baby.

ReplyDelete

59. Anonymous20 September 2014 02:23

i like chickens

ReplyDelete

Replies

- Anonymous21 September 2014 00:56

  Hahah lol

  Delete

Reply

60. Anonymous4 October 2014 19:28

It's just to scare you kids I tried I'm still here For I know is that Bloody Mary Was murded for no reason by king henry she was a beautiful girl but now oh and baby blues mum was also pretty

ReplyDelete

61. Anonymous4 October 2014 19:30

DONT GET SCARED

ReplyDelete

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This is such bullshit I mean oh my God a baby and a psychotic mother who killed a baby and then is being a real bitch and is gonna a scream and is gonna say give me back my baby oh my God i'm so scared ok what happens if you flush the baby in front of her then leave the bathroom will she haunt you forever like bloody Mary you can reply back but I won't repsond probably because a fucking clown will kill me at 3:00 a.m. right beside my bed wish me luck that I live

Delete

Anonymous22 October 2012 23:38

Ok lets get a few things straight when you flush the baby in front of her will she then will she haunt you or kill you right on the spot

Delete

Anonymous2 January 2013 19:32

ok now thats scary but.... mayme its not real bacause a mum loves her baby mothers, they dont. do that
its just mean killing a baby
that woman
is a fugitive

Delete

Anonymous2 July 2013 22:07

im going to try it it will be an interesting experience ....*devious look* XD

Delete

Anonymous14 August 2013 09:36

Okay Idont think ima take a shower for a while O.O

Delete

Anonymous2 October 2013 15:44

Omg it worked, we were carrying the baby and we threw it on the ground and ran, and now, we look on our hands and thiers baby bluecolor on our hands

Delete

Anonymous18 January 2014 15:45

Yh right ima do all that and in gonna bloody die ey? I aint fripin going to the toilet now-_- for 24 hours or so...untill i forget.... This is crap my life is crap too

Delete

Anonymous18 January 2014 16:02

Hell no! Flipin mad kids dont get scared LOL its made up...its only to scare you...from the top of me heart i really think a brave lad should try it for proof its a lie..

blame us if you die...sorry 0.0 R.I.P. oh and isnt there a hint ...i saw on the other webdite..and it completely diff story...People stay calm;)

Delete

Reply

2. Anonymous30 October 2011 23:02

hmm now i got something fun to do monday :D and the best part... im gonna do it during school w/ my mates xD

ReplyDelete

Replies

- Anonymous26 March 2012 16:51

yuhh loner i would have had planns thats how yuhh knoee yur living in yur parents basement playing video games

Delete

- Anonymous27 July 2012 20:04

Learn how to spell before you judge someone. lol. ^

Delete

Reply

3. Anonymous25 January 2012 21:29

Never tried it but my friends cousim has and she says they like her

ReplyDelete

Replies

- Anonymous26 March 2012 16:53

has it evr worked ???

Delete

- Anonymous29 March 2012 11:54

who did she like the mother or the blue baby .does she have any scratches.

Delete

- alexus carman3 March 2014 19:03

If no one does it they are scared i done did this it is not real

Delete

Reply

4. Anonymous30 January 2012 19:18

Wow *shiver* I do bloody mary with no problem but this one ha don't think so

ReplyDelete

5. Anonymous1 February 2012 21:52

hell im going to do it to night

ReplyDelete

Replies

- Anonymous26 April 2012 22:11

y u idiot

Delete

- Anonymous16 June 2012 05:32

I will never try this ever

Delete

- Anonymous27 January 2013 02:25

wow no way in the universe will i do that EVER in my entire life!!!!!!!!!!!

Delete

- Anonymous16 February 2013 20:08

If u do this you ave my full power and that is alot if u want to live say all fey folk witchs warlocks wizards give me your power so I live and baby blue and his mother see i have your powers and will stay long enough so i get satfaised and see that they are real!(I can`t fuckin spell just chant that three or 4 times 5 is the best and if it works you wll live but u have to believe an summon your inner power and i can sense that is alot so it should work do this don`t i repete DON`T take any chancs.If it dosn`t then.....your dead so dead won`t be dead if u don`t drp the baby I REPEATE DON`T DROP THE FUCKIN DEMON BABY THRE TIMES!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!)

Delete

- Anonymous23 June 2013 06:19

I dare someone to do this the top one thou!

Delete

Reply

6. Anonymous5 February 2012 22:20

Heck no i ain't do dat for seet

ReplyDelete

Replies

- Anonymous29 March 2012 11:52

its totally fake !!!

Delete

Anonymous15 July 2012 00:12

No it's not. My friend did it with her sister but she did it with the lights on & there was a super loud bang & she took the camera & ran....she put it on FaceBook. It's real. o.o

Delete

Anonymous26 October 2012 07:31

post a link for the video

Delete

Anonymous13 February 2013 09:23

so wheres the link?? You lieing son of a bitch lol

Delete

Anonymous11 October 2013 23:40

Lol

Delete

Reply

7. Anonymous12 February 2012 22:54

I would so do it..... wit 20 ppl. i would be nuts to do it by myself!!!!!

ReplyDelete

8. Anonymous5 March 2012 22:04

yep did this by myself nothing happened except for me shitting my pants about thinking of doing it by myself

ReplyDelete

9. Anonymous26 March 2012 16:49

wow yuhh guyys are so stupid ^^^^ i bet if we did it, yuhh would be scared out yur pants

ReplyDelete

10. Anonymous2 April 2012 18:35

does this come from anything? was there really a woman and a baby? or is it just a made up story? if it is based on a real story...does anyone have names or a date? my curiosity got the best of me. i have looked this up like crazy and havent found a clue...

ReplyDelete
Replies

- Anonymous5 April 2012 07:43

same i would not wont to be killed read bloody mary she could rip ur eyes out *shiver, scream* ahhhhhhhh

Delete

- Anonymous2 June 2012 05:48

NA NA , I DID BLOODY MARY... SHAT AINT REAL, NUT THIS SHIT NA NA YU BUGGIN !!!!! I AINT PUSSY , yo no muero hoy -___-

Delete

Reply

11. Anonymous5 April 2012 09:41

Wow, I'm to much of a whimp. I would never do this... or would I? I want to send one of my friends to do it so I can see if its real or not, pahaha.

ReplyDelete

12. Anonymous12 April 2012 20:23

anyone done this?

ReplyDelete

13. courtney17 April 2012 12:36

i done this, its shit scary.
i got scratches down my arm. :|

dont recommend to do it its horrible.

ReplyDelete

14. Dee'Jaii20 April 2012 21:05

Ill Never Do It But I Love The Stories !!!

ReplyDelete

15. Anonymous14 May 2012 15:35

I've done the bloody mary thing and nothing happened. and compared to the stories i've heard about bloody mary this will be a peace a cake how much u want to bet that nothing will happen

ReplyDelete

16. Dare to be scared21 May 2012 15:59

Hey i have all these strories and more on my site its cold Dared To Be Scared

https://sites.google.com/site/thescaredsite/

ReplyDelete

17. DIEJACOB23 May 2012 19:00

i am forcing jacob the piss of at my school to do bloody mary

ReplyDelete

Replies

- Anonymous12 June 2012 00:05

DO NOT BE A FREAKING HATER :(?!

Delete

Reply

18. Anonymous13 June 2012 23:35

Courtney, the one who said you got scratches on your arm, your an idiot. Everyone here knows you aint got no scratches on your damn arm so stfu and stop trying to scare people.

ReplyDelete

19. omg322 June 2012 10:52

i would just like to know has any1 really died from it like who know if they r lying ?

ReplyDelete

20. Anonymous9 July 2012 20:31

I got a question bout BM...do u have to stand starring into a miror with a candle indark room for it to work?? And do u hsve to say it out loud or can it be in ur head??

ReplyDelete

21. Anonymous22 July 2012 07:40

I did the second version and nothing happened. Haha

ReplyDelete

22. Donald Sukhnanan1 August 2012 21:57

Hmmmmmm I don't knw if its real or not but one thing is certain, somethings are better left unknown, although I will love to see, I won't try it...lol

ReplyDelete

23. Anonymous6 August 2012 15:00

tha was a creepy story my freind and i saw her in her room!! crazy right!!!!!!!!!!???????

ReplyDelete

Replies

- Anonymous27 September 2012 21:04

Yah sure

Delete

Reply

24. Anonymous10 August 2012 23:31

So what happens if you don't drop the baby?

ReplyDelete

Replies

- Anonymous27 September 2012 21:03

Da u die

Delete

Reply

25. Anonymous27 September 2012 21:10

There's another version that I've done and it work. It goes like there is 2-4 people in a room everyone has to stand in a corner of the room and u say baby blue and pretend to throw a baby the person u threw it to has to caught it,when someone drops it sometimes u will see the baby fall and u will hear a baby cry when u hear a cry u have to run out of the room realy fast and if u don't then something will grab your foot and drag u or u will be lifted up and thrown down.

ReplyDelete

Replies

- Anonymous26 April 2014 11:26

I heard that if u hold the baby long enough the mother's ghost will appear, and u have to shout in her face y she killed her baby. Then she will scream really loud, but u can't cover ur ears or u will drop the baby, off u happen to drop him, then the mother will grab a shared of glass from ur mirror and stab u with it and u can't escape because something will pull u down so u can't run out the bathroom. But this seems a little different. There's also more to this part y I've heard but im not gonna write all of that....

Delete

Reply

26. Anonymous1 October 2012 02:06

does this really work

ReplyDelete

27. Anonymous25 October 2012 05:36

YOLO= YOU ONLY LIVE ONCE!!!!!!!!!! everyone uses anonymous lol!!!

ReplyDelete

28. Anonymous2 December 2012 21:55

What happens if you five her the baby back? Will she still kill you or will she be creeped out a be like what the fuck is wrong with you?

ReplyDelete

Replies

- Anonymous2 December 2012 21:56

  give I mean...

Delete

Reply

29. Anonymous5 February 2013 19:17

when they metion the part where you pass the baby around, what happens if you don't drop the baby do you return it to the mirror or something.

ReplyDelete

30. Jeremy Lawrence10 February 2013 14:30

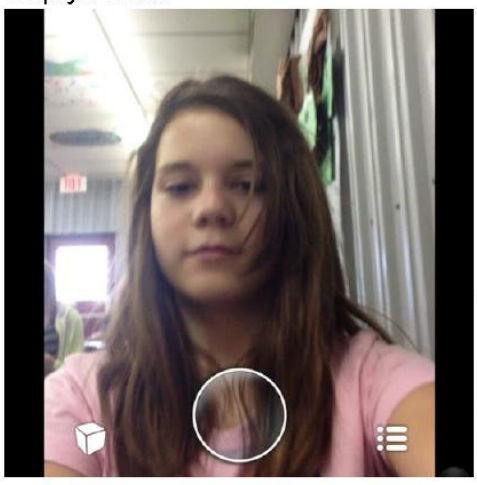
This comment has been removed by the author.

ReplyDelete

31. Anonymous3 April 2013 03:41

scary

ReplyDelete



32. madison carrillo20 May 2013 18:00

i will never ever ever ever do this fuck u people lol jk

ReplyDelete

33. Anonymous27 June 2013 19:16

omg this is scary my cuzon did this and she has scars down her arm

'The water did have a funny taste': Body is found in water tank at 'cursed' Cecil Hotel

Tim Walker
Thursday 21 February 2013

independent.co.uk

The guests at the Cecil Hotel in downtown Los Angeles were concerned about the water. There was weak pressure in the bathroom taps and showers, and a flood in one of the rooms on the fourth floor. “The water did have a funny taste,” said a British guest, Sabrina Baugh. “When you turned the tap on, the water was coming black first for two seconds and then it was going back to normal.” Baugh and her husband had been staying at the Cecil for over a week. “We thought it was just the way it was here,” she later told CNN.

But when one of the Baugh’s fellow residents complained on Tuesday, a maintenance worker was sent to investigate, and in one of the four large, metal water towers on the roof, he made a gruesome discovery: the body of a young woman, lying at the bottom of the tank. The body was soon identified as that of 21-year-old Elisa Lam, a Canadian student, who had been missing for three weeks. The cause of death, said LAPD Sergeant Rudy Lopez, remained uncertain. Foul play had not been ruled out, nor had the possibility of “a very, very strange accident”.

Lam, who arrived in California from Vancouver on 26 January, was last seen acting strangely on CCTV footage from the a hotel lift on 31 January. In the clip, she presses buttons for multiple floors, peers furtively into the corridor, and then retreats to the corner of the elevator as if hiding. Bernard Diaz, 89, a tenant of the Cecil’s third floor for 32 years, told the *Los Angeles Times* he’d heard a “tremendous” racket from the floor above on the night Lam disappeared. Police said the only routes to the roof where her body was found were via a fire escape, or a locked, alarmed door accessible only to hotel staff.

The Cecil has a dark past. Opened in 1927 in what was then a thriving neighbourhood, its fortunes declined along with the rest of downtown Los Angeles. Chris Nichols, an associate editor at *Los Angeles* magazine, told KPCC that the hotel was the scene of more than one murder in its first decade, “and a woman jumped out a window in the ‘60s”.

Thanks to its tumbling room rates, the hotel began to attract those clinging to the lower rungs of society. Richard Ramirez, known as the “Night Stalker”, reportedly stayed on the 14th floor in the mid-1980s, when he murdered at least 14 people. Austrian serial murderer Jack Unterweger, who was later convicted of killing 11 prostitutes in Europe and the US, stayed at the Cecil while writing an article for an Austrian magazine about crime and prostitution in California. He is thought to have killed at least three of his victims during that time.

The hotel came under new ownership in 2007, but, despite its multi-million dollar makeover, the LAPD say officers are often called to the Cecil to deal with drugs and domestic abuse offences. Much of downtown LA has been regenerated, but the hotel still sits mere yards from the notorious “Skid Row” neighbourhood. Following the grim discovery on Tuesday, and despite the management’s offer to put them up elsewhere, 11 of the Cecil’s residents chose to stay put. Rooms start at $65 per night.

Meet the world's only 'vegetarian' vampires

08:23 EST, 6 November 2014 | dailymail.co.uk

From supernatural strength to an unfortunate taste for human blood, vampires have long enjoyed a terrifying reputation.

But according to a pair of real life British vampires Vanian, 53, and Ethereal Dark, 27, who both hail from Manchester, the reality of vampiric living is somewhat different.

Although they spend their days sleeping and do drink blood, the married couple insist that they would never take it unasked ('That would be assault!' says an outraged Vanian).

Acceptance: Vanian, 53, and Ethereal Dark, 27, want people to be more accepting of vampires

Myths: The couple are also keen to bust vampire myths, among them a dislike of garlic, churches and mirrors

Nocturnal: Although the couple can - and do - come out in the day, they prefer to 'honour the night'

They also are happy to eat garlic, can get near a cross without mishap and even like churches, while fake fangs are a no-no.

'It's a myth that you can bite someone to get blood because that would be assault,' explains a wearily patient Vanian. 'You don't know whether they have infections either.

'We don't sleep in coffins - we don't even have a coffin. We don't walk around with fangs either; in fact, we don't have false fangs.'

They do, however, enjoy a drop of blood or two with most coming from volunteers who have been dubbed 'Black Swans' by the vampire community, or from each other.

'Too much blood would make you vomit,' adds Vanian.

'It's not like in a film where it's dribbling down your chin. Your body tells you.

'It's personal too. It's always done one on one. We drink blood about twice a week but we do eat other food as well, especially red meat.'

Vanian, who says he uses a little razor rather than fangs to extract blood from his wife, is at pains to point out that not just any blood will do.

'Black Swans have to get a health certificate or [drinking blood] is like Russian Roulette,' he continues.

'You don't know what they've got. Infections are everywhere. Also, we don't hack people up, that's not what we're about. Anyway, you'd be arrested if you did that.'

Other vampiric myths that Vanian and Ethereal Dark are keen to quash include any suggestion that they can't enter churches and don't have a reflection.

They also say that far from being forcibly turned into a vampire as shown in films and TV series such as True Blood, the process happens via what they describe as a 'gentle awakening'.

'It can happen at any age,' explains Vanian. 'It's a calling. A natural progression. You realise that you don't feel like everyone else.

'You start asking questions and waking up to who you really are. It's a way of looking inside yourself and yes, you do lose people when it happens.

'We're doing this interview to educate people,' he adds. 'It's your choice whether you believe in what we say or not.'

Supper: The pair say they are happy to eat human food and only take blood from each other

Community: The couple run a group for fellow vampires and say there are many more than

you might imagine

Given that the couple closely resemble goths and have little in the way of fictional vampires' supernatural powers, are they surprised that people question their credentials?

'We do encompass the gothic culture. and we may well look like gothic people. It's always been there with the culture, the music, the artwork,' ripostes Vanian.

'The vampire extends to goths but there are people in our community who have mainstream looks. It's not necessarily a look that everyone wants. There could be someone three seats down from you who is a vampire and you would never know about it.'

Much like the 'normal' appearance of the vampires in True Blood and Twilight then, although Vanian says he's far from impressed by the latter.

Good stuff: Vanian and Ethereal Dark are fans of True Blood which they say is - in some respects - accurate

Ridiculous: Twilight by contrast is well wide of the mark and bears little resemblance to the couple's lives

'True Blood is very good but Twilight is not,' he says. 'No we don't sparkle. Again, it's not the true story. It's not my world.'

Nevertheless, the couple say they would like more people in their world and hope that in time, people will become more accepting of their lifestyle.

'I'd like people to understand that we're real and that we're here to stay,' says Vanian. 'We're not horrible or evil and we want acceptance for what we are.

'Acceptance that there is a different way of living. People should be more open minded.'

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Bulgarian archaeologists find skeleton of child buried with anti-vampire ritual

sofiaglobe.com

Written by The Sofia Globe staff on October 30, 2014 in Bulgaria

voden archaeology

The skeleton of a child whose legs had been bound after death in an anti-vampire ritual has been found by archaeologists at a dig at the Voden Fortress in the Rhodopes, according to the head of the Assenovgrad Historical Museum, Ivan Doukov.

Three “vampire” skeletons were found this autumn during the archaeological dig at the fortress, near a village that dates back to Roman and ultimately Thracian times.

Local media quoted Doukov as saying that in the case of one of the other bodies, the legs were tied after death, and in the other case, the feet were severed.

So-called “vampire” burials in Bulgaria, involving remains dating back to medieval times, have excited considerable interest.

Earlier in October, at the Perperikon site, the skeleton of a man was found with a ploughshare driven through its ribcage. The skeleton was said to date from the 13th century CE. Driving a ploughshare through the ribcage was among rituals, like tying the legs or placing stones on the chest, intended to prevent the dead becoming undead.

The Assenovgrad museum’s Doukov said that medieval people were very superstitious.

“They believed that if someone in his lifetime was a bad person or if he died under unusual circumstances, he could become a vampire and harass his living relatives.”

Doukov said that such superstitions still exist in the Rhodope Mountains and northwestern Bulgaria. They are very similar to medieval beliefs about vampires and other malicious beings.

In August, Doukov announced that 30 graves dating from the 30th century, most of them of children, as well as a Thracian burial from the fifth to sixth century BCE had been uncovered

at the Voden fortress above the town.

At a news conference earlier this year, Perperikon archaeological chief Professor Nikolai Ovcharov said that the highest incidence of graves where indications of anti-vampire rituals were found was in the Rila and Rhodope mountain areas.

These were places where Christianity was in a weaker position against enduring pagan traditions, he said. Such rituals continued at least into the time of Ottoman rule in Bulgaria, he said.

(Archive photo of excavations at Voden Fortress: BNR)

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California Teen Allegedly Sets Christmas-Themed Stuffed Animals On Fire At Walmart

By Ashlee Kieler

(David Gutowski)

(David Gutowski)

In the past we've reported on some very disturbing behavior when it comes to consumers, stuffed animals, and Walmart (remember the humping incident?). The weirdness continued early this morning at a California store when a teen allegedly started a fire with the toys.

CBS Los Angeles reports that a 13-year-old was arrested after allegedly starting an arson fire at a local Walmart around midnight.

Officials with the local police department say surveillance video shows the blaze started when the teen used a lighter from the Christmas aisle to ignite a display of holiday-themed teddy bears.

A customer was able to put out the fire with a nearby fire extinguisher before firefighters arrived at the scene.

Police officials say the teen suspect, who was at the 24-hour store with his family, was arrested in the parking lot.

Although one person was treated at the scene for shortness of breath, fire officials say no injuries occurred as a result of the fire.

The store was evacuated for nearly three hours while fire officials investigated.

Teen Arrested After Allegedly Lighting Stuffed Animals On Fire In Glendora Walmart [CBS Los Angeles]

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Silent man in werewolf mask shoots worker in California, witness says

By and AnneClaire Stapleton , CNN
updated 4:13 PM EST, Sat November 29, 2014

cnn.com

Source: ktla

- The victim was shot in the head
- Police are searching for the masked assailant
- "He didn't say a word" during the shooting, a witness says of the attacker

(CNN) -- A man wearing a werewolf mask shot a worker at a check-cashing business in Southern California and fled, sparking a massive hunt, authorities said.

Police are searching for the masked assailant, who shot the worker in the head during the attack in Chino on Friday.

The victim -- a 58-year-old man -- was a construction worker at the business and is expected to survive, police said.

His co-worker, Armand Soliano, said they thought it was a prank when the assailant walked in. He opened fire without speaking to anyone.

Police are searching for a man who wore a werewolf mask and shot a worker at a check-cashing business, authorities said.

Police are searching for a man who wore a werewolf mask and shot a worker at a check-cashing business, authorities said

"He didn't say a word," Soliano told CNN affiliate KABC. "He shot him in the head for no reason."

At the time of the incident, the business was closed for renovations, but it had its back doors open.

"The suspect entered the business ... through an open rear door and shot the victim upon encountering him inside," said Lt. Aaron Kelliher of the Chino Police Department.

After the shooting, the assailant took off on foot. Despite an "exhaustive search," the gunman was nowhere to be found, Kelliher said.

The victim was treated at a local hospital and released. The motive of the shooting is unclear.

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Lost in Northern NJ

Abandoned lost weird places in northen new jersey

Wednesday, August 1, 2012

Prior to World War II America was in one of the worst depressions and unemployment crisis they have ever faced. In the little state of NJ there was a massive amount of German Immigrants living there, over 100,000, and they needed a way to express there anger toward the government. There were many bloody fights between plant workers and the people who owned the plants, the Germans looked back to their home land and saw Hitler had turned around the poverty stricken economy and turned it around. Only a certain portion of the immigrants accepted the Nazi ideals that Hitler was using, they soon became known as the Bund having over 10,000 members just from NJ, the Nazi party back in Germany actually gave the Bund funding. The leader of the Bund was a man by the name of Fritz Kuhn, he was a WWI vet and hand picked by Hitler himself to lead this radical movement in America. Camp Nordland which was opened in a little town, also my hometown of Andover NJ drew a ton of people to the little area. Over 10,000 people turned out to the opening of this camp, the people of Andover which only had a population of a little under 500 people at that point accepted the Bund because they brought a ton of revenue to the small town. However they did not like them per say as they walked around saluting Hitler, wearing swastikas, and military uniforms. As time went on people would start to protest the camp and claim that they were doing wrong things, the leader Fritz Kuhn was being looked at the FBI and IRS for embezzlement of money, DWI charges, and many more. The camp would hold weekend get aways at the camp for children, they would learn to march, learn the ranks of Hitler's army, and that the only perfect man is a white Christan German. Soon the deputy of Andover started to set up a personal crusade to kick them out he would attend meetings and take down every one's licence plate and watch all the activities going on and tell the FBI. I remember when I was a little kid going to Hillside, which is now a children's park. Kinda creepy when you think about this dark party of history there.

1. AnonymousFebruary 2, 2013 at 11:31 PM

The pictures suggest Camp Nordland is only a few ruins in the woods. Actually the main building in the top picture is still in use as a Recreation Hall at Hillside Park for the Township of Andover, and the fields where rallies and marches were held are now soccer and baseball fields.

2. AnonymousMarch 31, 2014 at 10:06 AM

When I was a kid, the area was used as a kind of a resort. The cabins were still intact. I

remember people swimming on that side of the lake and docks I think

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OldMagazineArticles.com

CLICK The National Picture Monthly
Vol. 1, No. 7, August, 1938: page 10

THE NAZIS IN AMERICA: THEY GROW BOLDER DAILY IN THEIR EFFORTS TO TEAR DOWN OUR DEMOCRACY

TARGET PRACTICE gives American Nazis a chance to become adept with arms. They dare not drill with guns in public, but they welcome handling them.

BUNDLEADER Fritz Kuhn and Germany's U. S. Ambassador, Hans Dieckhoff, seem to be friendly enough here.

THE PICTURES on these pages were not made in Germany. They may look like accurate shots of a foreign political movement—which they are—but they were made right here in these United States. Almost coincidentally with Hitler's assumption of power in the Reich, our free democracy began to feel the long paw of Nazi propaganda. Overnight there sprang up on a national scale a Friends of New Germany, its program incorporating all the repression and racial persecution of the Nazified fatherland. Starting from hushed meetings, nursed on literature and perhaps funds from the homeland, the movement grew more open, more bold, until it found itself in the midst of a first-class Congressional investigation. Ensuing publicity made the Friends dissolve, but it was immediately replaced by the German-American Bund, which has continued the drive for a Nazi America. German and American Nazis continually deny that they have any connection with each other; yet Ambassador Dieckhoff has addressed meetings attended by Bund members and Hitler has received Bund officials in Berlin. In 60 American counties, on 22 American camp sites, alien-fostered forces drill and agitate to end our democracy.

THIS BOOTH was a feature of a Nazi celebration in New York's Madison Square Garden last year. It advertised the German Awakener and Observer, official newspaper of the Nazis in America. Note the uniformed attendants on duty and the pictures of Adolf Hitler.

"FIGHTING GERMANISM" is the slogan of this Bund yearbook. Note the picture of Hitler receiving Fritz Kuhn and the symbolic welding of U. S. and Nazi flags.

OldMagazineArticles.com

-the second of four pages-

THESE FACES are those of typical Nazi leaders in America. These are the men who preach against our democratic nation. Their motto is: "For a Single Germanism in America and at Home". Left to right: Gustav Elmer, the Bund's national organizer; August Klapproth, president of Camp Nordland and Hudson county, N. J., leader; Gustav Kunze, chief of public relations, who has often quarreled with the American Legion; James Wheeler-Hill, Bund secretary, whose Anglo-Saxon name is said to be acquired; Donald Shea, who is not a Bund member, but commands the National Gentile League.

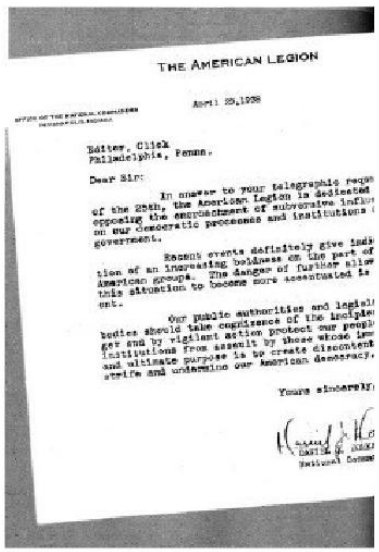
FIVE NAZIS had the effrontery to drive this truck through New York's heavily Jewish garment district. They were beaten up.

PRO-NAZI propaganda circulars were seized from the German ship, Estes, in New York in 1934. This is an example of the bold plotting of Nazi agents.

NEW YORKERS were shocked to find swastikas painted on a Jewish Synagogue in 1937. The low vandals who did this were not found.

WHITE RUSSIANS in America are joining the Nazi movement. One is A. A. Vonsiatsky, who "plots" to overthrow the Soviet regime.

VONSIATSKY has fitted out his Connecticut home as a miniature arsenal, employs a pudgy-faced, uniformed orderly. Note National Guard box on the floor.



THE AMERICAN LEGION

April 25,1938

Editor, Click
Philadelphia, Penna.

Dear Sir:

In answer to your telegraphic reque
of the 25th, the American Legion is dedicated
opposing the encroachment of subversive influ
on our democratic processes and institutions
government.

Recent events definitely give indi
tion of an increasing boldness on the part of
American groups. The danger of further allow
this situation to become more accentuated is
ent.

Our public authorities and legisl
bodies should take cognizance of the insidio
ger and by vigilant action protect our peopl
institutions from assault by those whose law
and ultimate purpose is to create discontent
strife and undermine our American democracy.

Yours sincerely,

A STRONG BULWARK against encroachment of Fascism is the American Legion. Its commander expresses their attitude for CLICK.

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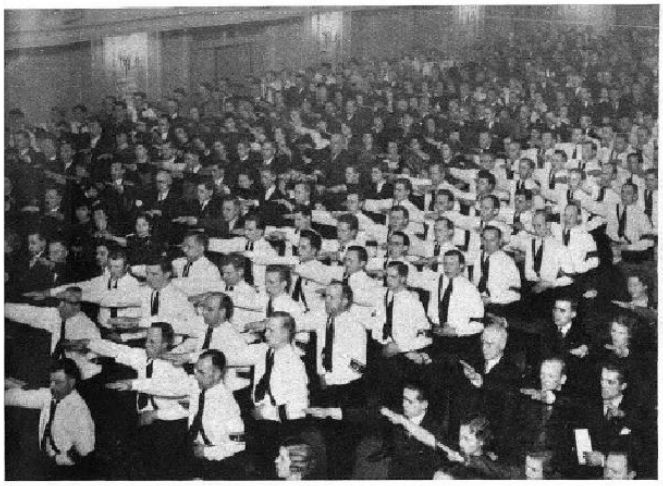
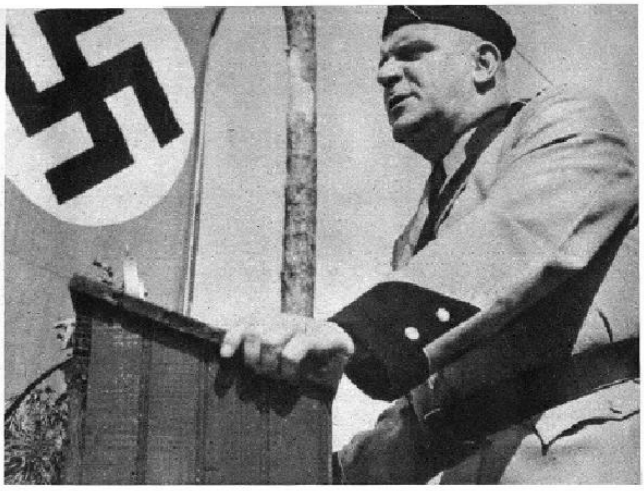


THE STORM TROOPS of the Nazis in America are the uniformed *Ordnungsdienst*. Their early uniforms were smuggled in from Germany; later they adopted the ones shown here; today they have more elaborate outfits.



BUNDESFUEHRER KUHN is a naturalized citizen. He gave up a job as chemist with the Ford Motor Co. to spend full time promoting Nazism. He claims leadership of 200,000; more likely figure is 20,000.

ONE AIM of the Bund is to unite all Fascist elements in America. These Italian Blackshirts attend a drill at Camp Siegfried, Long Island.

"WHO'LL BUY my nice swastikas?" cries a hawker at Siegfried. The sign above, at the same camp, says: "BRONX POST—FOR CHRISTIANS ONLY".

YOUTH MUST learn the ways of strife. A knife may be an innocent thing, but not when it's coupled with doctrines of hate.

ON PUBLIC MARCHES they make sure to carry Old Glory. But here the German Nazi flag precedes it during a parade at Camp Nordland, N. J. At camps like this all over the U. S. the Nazis drill for "the new day".

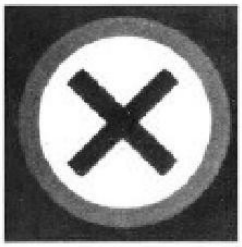
"THE CHILDREN say they would run away if their parents didn't make them stay," a liberal German-American newspaper reported of Camp Nordland. "The general atmosphere is that of a penitentiary".

THE NAZIS IN AMERICA: CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

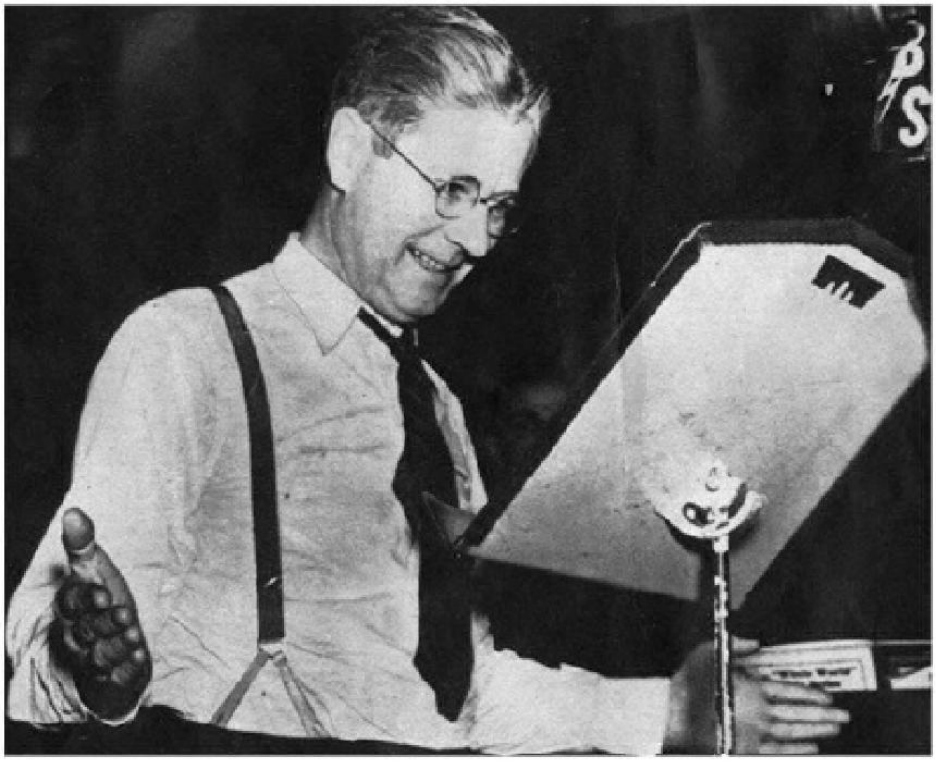
OldMagazineArticles.com

CLICK The National Picture Monthly -the last of four pages-
Vol. 1, No. 7, August, 1938: **Backcover**

THE ROAD TO FASCISM: FIRST THE INSIGNIA, THE BIG-CHINNED BARKING, AND THEN THE UPRAISED ARM



FASCISM has a way of starting as a friend of labor, a friend of agriculture, a foe of mysterious "vested interests." Hitler, sent to jail as a dangerous radical in 1923, spent his political infancy shrieking for the right of economically oppressed German masses, even called his party "National *Socialist*." Mussolini, until 1914, was a leading light in Italy's Socialist Party and editor of a Socialist newspaper. And now, from Wisconsin, comes Governor Phil LaFollette's announcement of a new party for America—a party of National Progressives who would slay the Communist spectre with one hand while reforming the "bad boys" of big business with the other. Even America is used to this sort of vague political chatter. But unfamiliar to America is the new party's insignia: a symbol that looks much too much like a Nazi swastika.



IT MAY NOT be fair to Phil LaFollette to brand him a potential Fascist. Perhaps the swastika-like cross, the mysterious symbolism, the spell-binding oratory, the shadowy protests, the vague program are all chance resemblances to the methods of Germany's Nazis. Unfortunately, he put himself on record in 1933 when, returning from a German visit, he wrote a series of newspaper articles expressing admiration for many of Hitler's policies. Governor Phil's platform manner is as grimacing and acrobatic as that of Dictator Benito Mussolini.

chance resemblances to the methods of Germany's Nazis. Unfortu-
as grimacing and acrobatic as that of Dictator Benito Mussolini.

THESE BOYS know that it pays to put on a good show. They have developed the knack of fooling their public by obscuring real issues behind clouds of pageantry and invective. Will free, democratic America ever fall for the same sort of thing?

HUEY LONG was America's nearest approach to the Fascist-dictator menace. The mob that wants something for nothing liked Huey's wild promises.

‘Cannibal mother tries to eat her newborn baby after giving birth’

Amy Willis for Metro.co.ukThursday 4 Dec 2014 2:08 pm

The child suffered injuries to his hand (Picture: CEN)

A mother has been accused of cannibalism after she was allegedly found biting her newborn baby’s arm.

The woman, named locally as 24-year-old Li Zhenghua, was found trying to eat the child while in a hospital ward in Shenzhen, southern China, recovering from the birth.

Luckily a nurse saw the woman with her teeth locked around her son and raised the alarm.

The nurse, named as Liu Tianlun, attempted to prise the woman off the baby but the mother refused to let her child go.

She was eventually sedated and extracted from the baby.

The hospital is now deciding whether to give the child back (Picture: CEN)

A hospital spokesman said: 'It was really shocking, the arm was badly damaged and suffered not only heavy bruising but bleeding as a result of the bite.

'Fortunately, doctors managed to insert something to stop her closing her teeth and then levered her jaws apart.

'After that they gave her a sedative and took the baby to a secure location.'

The mother is believed to have been living on the street after being thrown out by her mother-in-law despite being pregnant.

She is believed to have been surviving on the streets for a number of weeks before going into labour and being taken to hospital.

Hospital staff are deciding whether to give the newborn back to his mother.
An investigation into the incident is ongoing.

Canterbury is sufficiently gay, council inspectors rule

One of Britain's most historic cities, Canterbury, has been told it is sufficiently gay – after a complaint sparked a two-month investigation costing thousands of pounds.

Rob Davies, spokesman for the council, said: 'Obviously we're delighted with the outcome of the investigation' Rob Davies, spokesman for the council, said: 'Obviously we're delighted with the outcome of the investigation' Photo: ALAMY Photo: ALAMY

A government watchdog decided that Canterbury in Kent does enough to promote homosexual culture, rejecting a complaint by local activists.

The Local Government Ombudsman – who asked for the city's council to provide evidence of how it supported the gay community – said it was satisfied the pink pound was being catered for.

As part of the investigation, the council had to prove its inclusiveness by giving details of "touring plays and musicals, for example, which would be of interest to the LGBT community".

And it had to show that it had "put forward suggestions for small events that it might help fund, as well as proposals for other events such as exhibitions".

Rob Davies, spokesman for the council, said: "Obviously we're delighted with the outcome of the investigation.

"We feel we do a great deal for the gay community in Canterbury and we have always tried to support various gay events and promotions."

"But at the same time it is not the duty of any council to set up a gay bar – that's not what councils do."

The two-month investigation began at the end of April after a letter was sent from two representatives of Pride in Canterbury.

Chairman Andrew Brettell lodged a formal complaint with the Local Government Ombudsman claiming his initial letter to the council in November fell on deaf ears.

Mr Brettell, in his 60s, said last month: "" We do not believe the council want a thriving LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) community in our city. The impression I get is that the council just doesn't want to know.

"I get the feeling it is precious because Canterbury has a cathedral and history. I think they think the gay community will turn it into Sodom and Gomorrah."

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Cassie Chadwick (1857-1907)

Most criminal profilers in America agree that the success of a good con is the perpetrator of the cons ability to think on their feet, adjust to all situations in an instant and be on a constant vigil for the next opportunity. Elizabeth Bigley, a con woman since the age of 11, did not perfect her abilities until she was nearly 40 years old and her biggest con goes down in America's strange history as one of the most elaborate and successful cons ever perpetrated in America.

At the age of 13, Elizabeth Bigley was first arrested for forgery, in Ontario, Canada. She had opened a bank account with very little money and began writing bad checks to businesses in Woodstock, Ontario. The courts determined that the young Elizabeth was mentally troubled and released her to her father. She made her way to Cleveland, Ohio in 1875, to be with her newly married sister. Elizabeth was in need of employment so she set up shop as a fortune teller under the name of Madame Lydia de Vere. Over the next 14 years she was married twice, first to Dr. Wallace Springsteen who quickly discovered her criminal behavior and filed for divorce. She next married a farmer named John Scott, however farm life did not suit Elizabeth and the couple was divorced four years later.

Elizabeth returned to Cleveland under the name of Cassie Hoover and opened a brothel on the west side of the city. To mask the criminal activities of her establishment, Elizabeth posted her address, in Cleveland's City Directory, as a boarding house for single women. There, in 1897, Elizabeth met and later married a wealthy doctor, Leroy Chadwick. Cassie Chadwick was not well received within Cleveland's elite but that did not stop her from trying to fit in. She was known to spend large amounts of her husband's money on spending spree's and throwing lavish parties to impress the socialites who lived along Euclid Avenue, Cleveland's "Millionaire Row". Shortly after their marriage, Elizabeth began to set the stage or her biggest con when she revealed to her new husband that she was the illegitimate daughter of industrialist and philanthropist, Andrew Carnegie. Dr. Chadwick took his new bride on a buying trip to New York City where Elizabeth, with the help of an Ohio banker who was acquainted with her husband, made her way to the home Carnegie. When she returned to the honeymoon suite in the Holland House hotel, she was in possession of a promissory note for two million dollars, endorsed by Carnegie, which Elizabeth claimed was a payoff to keep his illegitimate daughter quiet and out of the newspapers of the era. She furthermore claimed that she was in possession of ten million dollars worth of promissory notes.

Upon her return to Cleveland, Elizabeth entered the Citizens Bank of Oberlin, Ohio seeking a loan from the unsuspecting bank president. Using the promissory note and the well respected Chadwick name, she secured a loan for $200,000. Over the next eight years Elizabeth, borrowing from bank after bank, as well as individuals, amassed and spent a fortune estimated to be nearly $10,000,000 (approximately $85,000,000 in 21st century dollars). Her

Cleveland Mansion of Cassie Chadwick

newfound wealth shot her to the top of the social scene in Cleveland and she was dubbed, "The Queen of Ohio", by the Cleveland newspapers. The banks and individuals who gave loans to Elizabeth never thought to question the promissory notes that she was providing. In many cases she would ceremoniously place forged promissory notes in safety deposit boxes of the banks that she was bilking out of hundreds of thousands.

The con came to an end in November of 1904 when Boston banker and millionaire, Herbert Newton arrived in Cleveland seeking payment for a $190,000 loan which he had given her on a $1,000,000 promissory note. Elizabeth claimed that she could not repay Newton any of the money because her holdings were being held up by a Cleveland bank. Newton, with a police escort, entered the Wade Park bank that she had named however the bank was devoid of records concerning Elizabeth's claims. Elizabeth was arrested in New York in early December, 1904. At the time of her arrest, she had amassed $5,000,000 worth of debt in several states but because she had defrauded banks that were federally insured, she was charged with seven counts of defrauding the government. Within the charges was one charge levied against her regarding her loans from the Citizens Bank of Oberlin which totaled $800,000 and, upon the discovery of Elizabeth's con, had driven the institution into bankruptcy.

Elizabeth Bigley, aka Cassie Chadwick was tried and convicted of multiple con related crimes, including theft and defrauding the government, in two different trials. She was sentenced to 14 years in the women's facility at Ohio State Penitentiary in Columbus, Ohio. Her federal trial was a media sensation that filled the courtroom with reporters, curios spectators, victims of Elizabeth's bank and individual cons and Andrew Carnegie, the man whose name was used to bilk a total of $10,000,000. When Carnegie was asked about Elizabeth's use of his name to con millions of dollars from individuals and banks, he stated that he had not issued a promissory note in twenty years and that the crimes may not have happened if they had asked him.

Elizabeth Bigley died in prison two years into her 14 year sentence, however her time in prison was not as dreary and miserable as most would think. Due to her popularity, Elizabeth was allowed to have some of her personal belongings in her jail cell, including custom tailored dresses, shoes, furs, lavish furniture and steady access to any newspaper writers who wished to talk to her.

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Catholic school enlists 'Santa' to help it stay afloat

2014-12-08 chicagotribune.com

At dusk Sunday, Santa rode up to a Far South Side school in a firetruck, led a cheerful crowd of parents, students and community members in a round of "Jingle Bells" and "Feliz Navidad," and took a group selfie before climbing on St. Florian School's roof.

And there he will stay, school officials and supporters say, until the small Catholic school in the Hegewisch neighborhood can raise the $56,000 necessary to keep its doors open for the 2015-16 school year.

"We are the forgotten part of Chicago because we are surrounded by all the steel mills that closed," said school board member Dawn Klein-Pilota. "We need to bring awareness here again."

In January, St. Florian was one of six schools slated to close during the 2014-15 school-year by the cash-strapped Archdiocese of Chicago, when its superintendent said it could no longer provide a subsidy that the school had been depending on the past few years. Since then, more schools have been slated to close, but they were not given an option to fundraise and stay open.

After a whirlwind of parent- and staff-led fundraising and cost-cutting to prove that the school could be self-sustaining, St. Florian then was able to stay open this year. The money came through the generosity of a community that did not want to see the 107-year-old school close, according to parents and the school's principal, Krista Wilkinson. More than $140,000 came piecemeal via carwashes, bake sales, pledges, vendor shows, a banquet, pancake breakfasts and raffles.

Yet unlike two other Catholic schools that saved themselves — Our Lady of Victory in Chicago's Jefferson Park neighborhood and St. Christopher Catholic School in Midlothian — St. Florian only raised enough money for one year, meaning that the school must redouble its fundraising efforts annually until it can increase enrollment enough to replace fundraising, according to Mirian Rodriguez, a parent who was helping organize Sunday evening's event.

"It's a big commitment, but it's worth it," said Diane Zbinden, one of several parents who have been working "endless" hours to keep the school open since the January announcement. "It's important to the community. It's important to Catholic education. It's important to the close-knitted school."

The challenge this year has been keeping the momentum going, according to Van Bensett, another parent who has given countless hours to fundraising efforts in the community since January. So far this year, the school has raised $55,000, Bensett said, and needs another $56,000 by January.

"I think it's been a little bit harder (this year)," Bensett said. "This year we've been doing fundraising, but we haven't expanded our base of donors. We want to expand our base of

donors because you can only ask the same people (for money) so many times."

The school is accepting checks and is raising funds online, at GoFundMe and PayPal.

Until the school raises enough money, Jesse Terrazas — the Chicago police sergeant and parent of a St. Florian sixth-grader, who volunteered to be Santa — said he will make do.

"I will be up here to wave to people in the evening," Terrazas said. "We will go inside this wonderful hut here. I have books, and hopefully we can find some Internet access. I still need to contact the North Pole and communicate with the elves."

mmrodriguez@tribpub.com

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CCC road in rome georgia

by Caydon 3 Followers
5 years ago from Some Sunny Beach, USA

Ok, so heres my tale: Several years ago I went to berry college in Rome, Georgia to see my brother. While I was there there were several 'ghost' stories which I kept coming across. While most of the tales appeared to be only stories, there were two which prove to be more than mere legend. One of which surrounds the 'Mountain Springs Church.' One night while partying around this church at 2 am in the morning, we kept hearing music like 'bells'. A short search of the area revealed the music was coming from the church. On entering the church, the music could clearly be heard. After searching, no clear source could ever be found for the music. On closer inspection the music seemed to be accompanied by a faint crying noise. Further investigation of the area revealed several 'occultic' symbols etched into the cement outside of the church. My second story is clearly the better of the two. While in Rome, at a local bar, I heard a band whos message was 'don't go down CCC road.' My curosity raised about the issue, I needed to explore this area. Two weeks later my friend and I decided to swallow our fears and explore this road. The myth goes that there are seven bridges that you cross over while on this road, except when you turn back there are only six bridges. Although this myth wasn't known by me at the time, I did notice several 'VERY STRANGE' occurances. Upon entering the road the entire atmosphere was somehow changed. Although it being the middle of the day, the shade from the trees made it appear ominously dark. After crossing what I assume to be the first bridge, my friend and I spotted a man in full camo hiding behind a bolder, holding a rifle. In his other hand was gripped a small boy, and both were crouched as if hiding. Continuing we passed the second bridge. By this point we already were spooked out. Sometime after that, we spotted a lady in the middle of the road, waving her hands wildly. We stopped and asked if anything was the matter. The lady appeared to be ancient, but was wildly animated. She began spouting off all kinds of crazy stuff. she was saying things like, 'i have more stocks and bonds than Ross Periot', 'Berry College took 10 years of my life and made it look like 2' and 'why don't you boys come in for ice-cream, i've been baking it all day'. After a short while what I assume was her husband emerged and said, 'she's crazy boys, you better get out of here' and then she sad 'Yeah you better leave before I run you in'. My friend and I at this point had heard enough, it was time to get outta there. We turned around and started out of there. On the way back we came upon the second bridge. The bridge was covered in little black birds, and I mean covered. The birds were not scattering as I drove up to them. I slowed down and looked outside as I drove by. What was curious is that the

birds would barely hop out of the way of the vehicle. It was as if they had no fear of being hit! continuing on we approched the first bridge where the man with the rifle once was. There was no sign of the man, but on the bridge there was a strange sight. Right smack in the middle of the bridge was what appeared to be a severed 'dear's head' I had to actuall move the thing to avoid running over it. After that we were finally out of there. I'm not sure what else was down that road, but I was sure not going to go down any further. Just thought I should share my account with you guys, and to say I'm a big fan of the podcast. Maybe sometime you can investiagate the area and do a video on it.

efeyas profile image

I grew up in Rome, and have been down this road several times. It is true about the bridges, but there is an explanation. Also, there was a Satanic church there, my oldest brother actually road up during a Satanic mass and quickly road back out. It was around 1970.

Berry College is a great place to go to, I was born and raised in rome...when I was little I use to go and get pictures with the family. Havent ever went to see if any of the stories were true but I deffantly believe them..and will find out for myself :-). I loved your story!

Awsome I have to check it out when I go and visit again. Just wondering what would happen if you asked the councilers about it.

i live in rome and the bridges are covered by the bushes i walk that road and i know that once church is the devil church an old aquatint went there and a people go hunting there and go in the church and the find goat heads on the wall and buckets of blood everywhere... i want to go see for my self but..... i hear that if u go down there just being curious then the devil will talk you in to taking your soul.....

i went about 5 minuts down the road and got a text GO HOME!!!!

I live in Rome too. I've heard all these stories and I decided to try it out for myself. So, me and two of my girls and two of my guys went. It wasn't that bad.. but we kept hearing stuff from the woods so we decided to turn back. We made it almost to the second bridge.

I went to CCC Road today. I went with three other guys. We parked at Pleasant Valley North Baptist Church, which is next to the entrance of the road. We made our treck on foot, which turned out to be our downfall. That and the fact that we didnt think to bring any water. We were stopped within the first mile by a polite and concerned log truck driver who warned us to stay on the road because there are bow hunters in the woods. We thanked him and went on our way. I am sorry to tell you that the bridge story is a let down. I did not count seven bridges. And some "bridges" were nothing more than a drain pipe running under the dirt road. We missed the turn off for the Mountain Springs Church, which is a bright yellow gate on the left. As a result of this mix up, we walked miles and miles worth of unnecessary steps. We finally turned around and began to walk back. When we passed the yellow gate, this time on our right, i suggested that we check it out. But the others were hot, tired, thirsty, and out of shape. They refused. I decided to run down the shady path beyond the gate alone, while they

continued ahead. My heart jumped when I saw the church building through the trees. I stood in the clearing for a few minutes, partly catching my breath and partly surveying the property. A sign stated that there was a $500 reward for turning in vandals. But i'm not a vandal. The cemetary climbs up a hill behind the small white church. The sun found its way through the gaps in the canopy and cast spots of bright light over the church and gravestones. It was a beautiful sight. While in the clearing, i heard several gun shots from the woods on the opposite side of the road, but i did not see that as a threat. I find it hard to believe that someone could locate that church for the first time and in the dark. There are many side roads that lead onto CCC Road. It is very confusing to navigate. And if you choose to make the treck to the church, if you begin to wind up a mountain side with a steep drop to your left, you have gone too far my friend. I look forward to exploring the church and cemetary at night with a video camera and K2 meter.

Signed, Sam

Ok, I live in Rome; I have lived in Rome all of my life. Yes these are local stories. I have traveled to the end of this road before and counted 7 bridges down, and 7 on the way back. One of the bridges is covered by trees on the other side. As far as the church, I didn't make it to the church because there's a fork in the road. We went right and should have kept straight; but as far as people going down there now, you better be prepared to walk because it is a gated road and cannot be driven on.

The church is not haunted or abandoned. We still have service once a month April-October. Bobby Stevens is our pastor and he also serves as pastor at Plainville Independent Methodist Church. Please feel free to learn more about Mountain Springs (church on CCC Road) at

http://www.mountspringschurch.com/

These stories come from to many beers and wild nights had by college students, past and present that have almost destroyed the church many times. Have many police reports, one has 30 names, 29 Shorter and 1 Berry that did major damage and painted all the occult symbols all over the church along with swastikas and yes they did the etching in the sidewalk that is in the posting above. The church was never used by devil worshipers or occult practitioners. My family has been associated with that church since the 1890's so we would know if any of this ever happened. I also keep the records for the church. That is why the gates were put up to protect the church and grounds. Please post or feel free to email me with any questions you may have about the church, grounds, and the community that surrounded it.

There may have been some satanic cults hanging out in that area but I assure u that road is safe. Ole satan is still roasting his ass off in hell.

I know as a teenager we had some awesome parties that lasted the whole night through.and heard a many if ghost tales which ive had some pretty wierd exsperinces on that rd.hardly ever did we make it out if there without getting stuck or flats you name it...sometimes we turned around.one night we were travel through and got stuck and it was so cold i literally thought we was gonna die.we build a fire to stay warm.we were there all night and it was

aweful and the graveyard and church didnt appear scary though i went to the church to look in and i was someqhat fritened.but the most scary part was the brick fireplace of an old burntdown place atill stood and there were activies going on there that make you wonder why go way out there to do anything but wrong.because it miles amd miles of nothing but dirt and tales and nothing out thwre what so ever.why was a nice lil church with a grave yard soing way out in a place where nobody could travel and no housea were cloae by.just saying this was 1970 so go check it out.alots change its grown since then imagine it back.it couldnt had any body i the church in them days.we normally got through even with a four wheel drive.it was not a common dirt rd thats for sure.

Grew up here in Rome. Been hearing these stories all my life. Never proven, never shown otherwise. Now the road is posted No Trespassing. Anyone going in is ticketed and fined. Possibly jailed. Have fun exploring folks.

Nothing but stories folks. The church is still used for services-not of the satanic kind, road is used for Berry service trucks & it is Berry hunting land. There is almost always some kind of hunter out there (turkey, dove, deer-bow & rifle). There is a ranger station at the entrance of the road that is always manned. Sorry to bust your bubble but stay off the drugs & go easy on the alcohol, then all those crazy scary things won't happen.

The church is a Christian church, not a satanic one. I've ridden my mountain bike on the property of the church during day and night. I never saw anything spookier than deer or turkeys. Although interesting, the stories about the church are just stories.

I live 5 minutes from CCC road and have walked down this road(in the dark) many, many times to hunt deer and turkey. Don't believe everything you read. There is nothing to be afraid of.. These so called "bridges" are little more than drainage ditches that run under the road in small pipes.. If it is not daylight then you may never even see them. Bunch of bull.

I live in Rome, but am not from Rome. This has been my home for the past 14 years. I guess I am having a hard time with all of these people who go to this CCC Road, because they want to expierenfe some sort of haunting, and satanic church? I believe that is what I am reading. This is so much bothering me... First, how twisted can people be? I read every comment. There is a gentleman who posted his Family has been affiliated wpth the Church up there since the 1890's, and he keeps records for the Church, He SAID U ARE WELCOME TO CONTACT HIM, IF U HAVE ANY QUESTIONS! He also said THIS CHURCH IS NOT SATANS CHURCH! DON'T ANY OF U PEOPLE KNOW, THE WORD OF GOD CLEARLY STATES, DO NOT MESS WITH THE ANOINTED ONES! FURTHER MORE, IF, THIS WERE A SATANIC BUILDING, WHY ON GODS GREEN EARTH, WOULD U RISK UR SOULS BY GOING OUT THERE? DO U NOT THINK SATAN IN REAL? DO U NOT THINK HE IS ALIVE? HE IS! HE IS POWERFUL, AND IF. ARE DRINKING, AND DOING DRUGS, HE WILL SURELY GET U! PLEASE DON'T THINK I AM SOME HOLY ROLLER, BECAUSE, I AM NOT, BUT I AM A BORN AGAIN CHRISTIAN. PLEASE LISTEN! BLOObloodTHEBLOOD ofOF JESUS, CHRISTIAN! I use to live a life of drinking

They r jus stories, I have been n Rome for 24 yes and I was raised her, I have been there several times, day or night nothing satanic is going on...

A strange humanoid creature: Charles Waterton's 'Nondescript'

Charles Waterton, The 'Nondescript', ca 1824. (Wakefield Museum)

I think that probably every person, at some point in their lives, gets the urge to make their own ridiculously interesting creature out of the shaved a** of a monkey. (Right?) Well this grim little fellow is the product of that impulse, created around 1824 by an eccentric but well-respected 19th century English naturalist, Charles Waterton (1782-1865). Waterton was a passionate environmentalist and explorer, travelling to remote parts of South America to study exotic wildlife and creating the world's first nature reserve on his estate in West Yorkshire. His book Wanderings in South America, which told of his adventures exploring Guiana, West Indies, is even said to have inspired and influenced Charles Darwin as a schoolboy. Waterton was also an accomplished taxidermist, and invented a preservation technique which used mercury-based chemical to harden the animal skins rather than relying on traditional stuffing.

In 1824 Charles Waterton returned to England from his travels in South America with the bust of this strange humanoid creature. The curious being had woeful eyes set closely on a hairless human-like face, with a thick red mane surrounding it's small, dark head. Waterton called it a 'Nondescript', due to the fact it didn't fit into any existing taxonomic categories. Although a few sharp-eyed observers accused Waterton of presenting the scientific community with a hoax, many more believed that this monstrous creature was the real thing, no more unbelievable than the sloth or duck-billed platypus which had recently been introduced to Europe by scientists travelling in strange and exotic lands. But the 'Nondescript' was indeed a fake: a product of Waterton's marvellous imagination and a demonstration of his innovative taxidermy skills, created by shaving the faces of two red howler monkeys and manipulating their wet skin together to give the hybrid a more human-like appearance.

This marvelous little creature, which can be seen today on display at the Wakefield Museum, is an interesting relic of a time where the exploration of the world offered such strange and exotic possibilities to the European imagination. But it also demonstrates the human urge to conjure the bizarre characters from our imaginations and place them in the world to be looked at and to entertain. This impulse is, perhaps, even more interesting than the Nondescript creature itself. It represents a part of a tradition that, I would argue, continues to preservere in forms like the curious creatures of Australian artist Patricia Piccinini, or even the fantastic muppets of Jim Henson. Although the historical context and intentions of Charles Waterton was different than these examples (it is said he was trying to pull a prank on a troublesome Liverpool customs official), all create weird and wonderful beings from the depths of their imaginations which work to expand the idea of what is possible in the real world.

What do you make of this impulse to create strange and extraordinary bodies and display

them in the world? Do you see connections between Waterton's Nondescript and the creation of curious bodies in contemporary art and culture?

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Chemists create ‘artificial chemical evolution’ for the first time

Scientists have taken an important step towards the possibility of creating synthetic life with the development of a form of artificial evolution in a simple chemistry set without DNA.

A team from the University of Glasgow’s School of Chemistry report in a new paper in the journal Nature Communications today (Monday 8 December) on how they have managed to create an evolving chemical system for the first time. The process uses a robotic ‘aid’ and could be used in the future to ‘evolve’ new chemicals capable of performing specific tasks.

The researchers used a specially-designed open source robot based upon a cheap 3D printer to create and monitor droplets of oil in water-filled Petri dishes in their lab. Each droplet was composed from a slightly different mixture of four chemical compounds.

Droplets of oil move in water like primitive chemical machines, transferring chemical energy to kinetic energy. The researchers’ robot used a video camera to monitor, process and analyse the behaviour of 225 differently-composed droplets, identifying a number of distinct characteristics such as vibration or clustering.

The team picked out three types of droplet behaviour – division, movement and vibration – to focus on in the next stage of the research. They used the robot to deposit populations of droplets of the same composition, then ranked these populations in order of how closely they fit the criteria of behaviour identified by the researchers. The chemical composition of the ‘fittest’ population was then carried over into a second generation of droplets, and the process of robotic selection was begun again.

Over the course of 20 repetitions of the process, the researchers found that the droplets became more stable, mimicking the natural selection of evolution.
The research team was led by Professor Lee Cronin, the University of Glasgow’s Regius Chair of Chemistry.

Professor Cronin said: “This is the first time that an evolvable chemical system has existed outside of biology. Biological evolution has given rise to enormously complex and sophisticated forms of life, and our robot-driven form of evolution could have the potential to do something similar for chemical systems.

“This initial phase of research has shown that the system we’ve designed is capable of facilitating an evolutionary process, so we could in the future create models to perform specific tasks, such as splitting, then seeking out other droplets and fusing with them. We’re also keen to explore in future experiments how the emergence of unexpected features, functions and behaviours might be selected for.

“In recent years, we’ve learned a great deal about the process of biological evolution through computer simulations. However, this research provides the possibility of new ways of looking at the origins of life as well as creating new simple chemical life forms.”

The project is the latest of the Cronin Group's efforts to explore evolution outside organic biology. Other projects have included the development of inorganic chemical cells known as iCHELLs, which are built from molecules of metal and exhibit some of the same abilities as living cells.

The paper, titled 'Evolution of oil droplets in a chemorobotic platform', is published in Nature Communications today. The research was supported by funding from the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC).

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Chile Police Discover Suitcases Made of Cocaine

Two suitcases carried by a woman who was about to fly to from Chile to Spain were virtually made of cocaine, police said.

Detective Leandro Morales at the Santiago airport said the drug "was not hidden in the luggage. This time the suitcases were the drug."

The suitcases were made of a substance combining cocaine with resin and glass fiber, Morales told The Associated Press.

A "chemical process" could be used to separate out the drug, Morales said, adding that the suitcases were heavier than their contents.

The 26-year-old Argentine woman was arrested.

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China cracks down on 'fake monks'

5 December 2014 bbc.com

Last updated at 07:05 ET

Monks hold a ceremony at a temple on Wutai Mountain

Visitors flock to China's sacred temples, and now they'll be able to avoid any fakes

Temples in China will be given certificates to show they're legitimate, in an attempt to stop worshippers from being scammed, it's reported.

Religious authorities are handing out the documents to real Buddhist and Taoist temples to differentiate them from fake ones, the official Xinhua news agency reports. The move aims to prevent con-artists posing as monks from ripping off visitors at sacred sites, officials say. "There have been some non-religious sites employing fake monks who tricked tourists into donating money or buying expensive incenses," Liu Wei, from the State Administration of Religious Affairs, tells the agency. Religious sites are encouraged to hang the official documents outside so visitors can see them. Two temples in Beijing have already been granted a certificate, but the system is due to be rolled out nationwide.

Profiteering from religious activities of any kind is prohibited in China, according to Xinhua, after the authorities cracked down on the "over-commercialisation" of religious sites. In 2013, two temples were shut down on China's Mount Wutai, a Unesco World Heritage site, for hiring fake monks to fleece tourists of their cash. The two sites - one of which was called the Temple of the God of Wealth - were apparently charging too much for ceremonies and tricking people into making donations.

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China's Gigantic Toilet Waterfall Has Citizens Flushed With Pride

by China.new

When life gives you lemons, make lemonade. When life gives you 10,000 recycled toilets, urinals and bathroom sinks, make a 300-ft long and 15-ft high **Toilet Waterfall**. Artists in Foshan, a city in southern China's Guangdong province, did just that in order to attract visitors to a ceramics trade show.

The trade show for pottery and porcelain product manufacturers took place on November 26th, 2014 but it would be a shame to disassemble the ginormous construct after only one day – it must have taken weeks to just gather together the 10,000 recycled bathroom fixtures. You read that correctly: RECYCLED, and presumably cleaned before being reused.

Then there's the time and labor required to affix the toilets to a sturdy (hopefully) backdrop, angle each one so they drain properly, work out the pipes & plumbing... Foshan's citizens had best get used to hosting the world's largest – or even ONLY – toilet waterfall in their town. One imagines they're flushed with civic pride. *(via ECNS)*

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The Moving of a Town

The first permanent settlement of American Falls was founded in 1800 and located on the West bank of the Snake River, on the opposite side of the river from the present location. In 1888 the “town” was moved across the river to the (what is now called) “original town site”.

In 1925, the Bureau of Reclamation, began the job of moving American Falls once again to make way for the American Falls Dam. The most difficult part of building the 94-foot-high and 5,277-foot-long composite concrete and earthen dam was not its construction and financing, but resolving the problems that the 23 mile long reservoir would have on the businesses. In all 344 residents, 46 businesses, three hotels, one school, five churches, one hospital, six grain elevators, and one flour mill were moved from the original town site, making this the largest government relocation project of its time! Depending on the quality of the building, dwellings would be relocated to one of three neighborhoods on the east, south and west side of the new town square.

The new city was platted on higher ground and had a park in the center of town; commerce lots would be on one side of the square faced by the government buildings on the other. Churches were to situated on the other two sides of the park, and homes were platted out from there. The alignment of the streets was not without controversy. The streets were laid out diagonally; parallel to the reservoir shore. Residents complained. “How will we teach our children north or south?” The city planners responded that the city was laid out so that the sun could shine in every window.

The Oneida Milling and Elevator Company’s grain elevator was the only structure that was not moved. Its 40-foot-deep foundation and 106-foot reinforced concrete walls still stand with its top rising above the water. It stands as a silent reminder of the remarkable history of American Falls.

The Dam was completed sixty days ahead of schedule on April 21, 1926. The dam’s gates where shut and the spring run-off started to collect in the reservoir which would eventually cover twenty-five miles upstream. On July 29, 1926 the “moving road” across the Dam was officially closed, ending the relocation of American Falls.

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Coast Guard finds zombie floating in Lake Michigan

wgntv.com

Posted 10:58 AM, November 3, 2014, by Elyse RussoUpdated at 10:17pm, November 3, 2014

High winds and waves on Lake Michigan caused Navy Pier's Halloween barge to sink Friday, and the Coast Guard confirms that debris from the barge, including zombie mannequins, were pulled from the water.

Chief Petty Officer Alan Haraf tells WGN a boat crew from Station Wilmette Harbor came across one of the zombie mannequins from the sunken barge and removed it for two reasons: To return it to its owner and because it was considered a hazard to navigation.

After they pulled the zombie onto the boat, the crew did what they would normally do during their routine "man overboard" training drills that they do with a 120- pound mannequin, including CPR, which they did making light of this "rescue" situation. Photos of the "rescue" below are used with permission.

While the Coast Guard has pulled a lot of strange things out of Lake Michigan, Haraf said this zombie has to be one of the strangest.

In this first photo, a head pops up to the surface of Lake Michigan

Wait…is that a human head or a zombie head?

Finally pulled from the Lake Michigan waters, it's clear: This is a zombie

A very scary zombie at that!

This zombie needs some serious dental work.

Doesn't this guy know that you can't revive a zombie?

- **John**

Must be a slow news day!

November 3, 2014 at 3:12 PM

- **AI**

Could it be Hoffa?

- **Lake Michigan full of zombies after haunted house barge partially sinks**

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Published: 01 Dec 2014 12:22 GMT+01:00

How could you possibly leave a 13th century work of art worth €1 million on the train? Well that's exactly what happened to an Italian art collector on a Paris to Geneva TGV train.

Francesco Plateroti had more reason than most to visit the lost property section at a train station.

The Franco-Italian art collector left a 13th century Chinese scroll "Le banquet des immortels à la terrasse de Jade" ("The banquet of immortals on the terrace of Jade") by Wang Zhenpeng, estimated to be worth around €1 million ($1.25M), on the TGV train he was travelling on on November 21st.

After presenting the work of art, which dates from the Yuan dynasty (1280 - 1329) in the French capital, Plateroti took the high-speed TGV train from Paris to Geneva line and got off at Bellegarde-sur-Valserine, a town close to the border with Switzerland and the final stop before Geneva.

Plateroti, who gives lectures on art around the world, didn't realize immediately that he didn't have the scroll with him. By the time a panicked Plateroti noticed that something was missing, the train had already left for Geneva.

"I was crushed when I realized I didn't have it with me," Plateroti told The Local. "It was a massive shock".

He immediately alerted staff, who contacted colleagues in Geneva. The train was searched, but unfortunately nothing was found.

All lost property items are sent to a central office in the Swiss city of Berne, but so far no million-euro painting has been handed in.

(The story of Plateroti's misfortune was covered by the Dauphiné Libéré newspaper)

The frustrated collector then took it into his owns hands to try to track down the work of art.

He published a small ad stating he would be willing to pay a reward to whoever returns it to him.

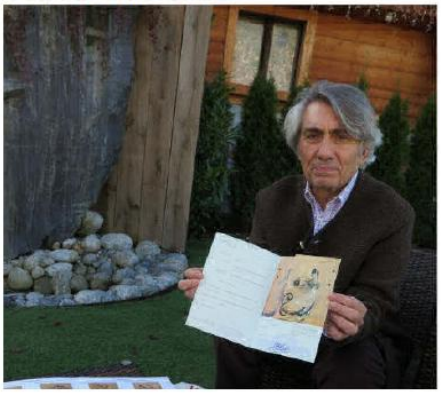
But that hasn't proved to have had the desired effect.

"People take advantage of my misfortune," Plateroti told The Local, adding the artwork would "sell for over €1 million at auction".

"They are calling me to say they have the painting and that they will send it once I put the

BELLEGARDE-SUR-VALSERINE

Un collectionneur perd un chef-d'œuvre de plus d'un million d'euros dans le train



reward money in their bank accounts.

"This all makes having lost the painting a lot worse."

While he hasn't received any good news yet concerning the loss of his prized possession Plateroti still remains hopeful.

"You have to be optimistic," he said.

"After all, a positive attitude can overcome many obstacles."

On the bright side, the painting can't be sold legally at least, because Plateroti still has the certificate that made it possible to travel with the painting and confirms its authenticity.

by Simone Flückiger

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Haunted Colorado mysteries: State's 1st serial killers, Hitler's ranch and a 'vampire'

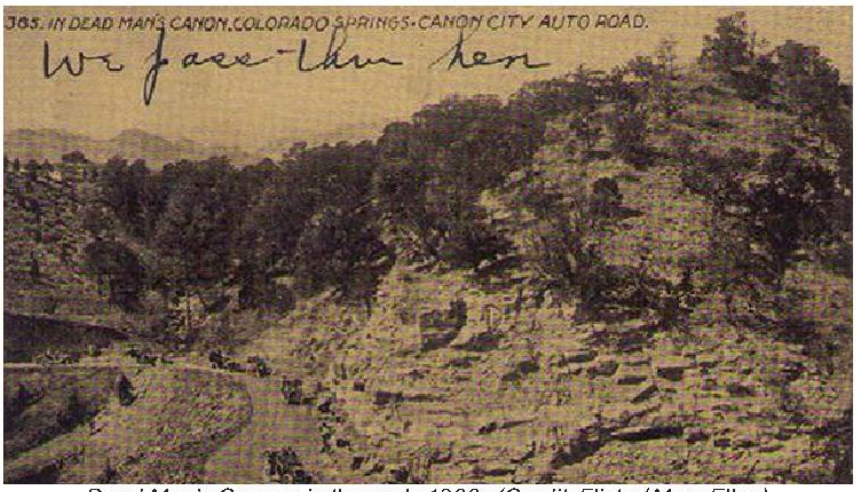
kdvr.com

Posted 4:09 pm, October 29, 2014, by Will C. HoldenUpdated at 04:26pm, October 29, 2014

DENVER — As one of the few major outposts in the American West, Colorado isn't short on oral history. And when Halloween comes around, the Centennial State is spoiled for choice when it comes to good ghost stories.

Over the next three days leading up to the haunted holiday, FOX31 Denver will be exploring some of our favorites — mostly those that are rooted in at least as much fact as folklore.

So fire up those jack-o-laterns, grab your favorite variation on the pumpkin spice beverage theme, make sure the lights are on and read up on our state's spookiest tales!



Dead Man's Canyon in the early 1900s (Credit: Flickr / Mary Ellen)

'Where is Felipe's Head?'

Some historians refer to the brothers as religious zealots. Others refer to them as America's first serial killers. One thing's for sure: There have few (if any) reports before or since that suggest any mass murderers took more lives in Colorado than the Espinosa Brothers did in 1863.

Described in newspapers of the day as having a "jack-o-lantern grin", Felipe Espinosa killed an estimated 32 Coloradans over a 12-month span, more than three times as many as the infamous outlaw Billy the Kid. One of those victims was William Harkins, who Espinosa reportedly killed with an ax to his head. Legend has it Harkins haunts the area where he was killed with that same ax sticking out of his head in the aptly named "Dead Man's Canyon" 10 miles south of Colorado Springs.

Caught in the cross-hairs of the Mexican-American War, Espinosa began his rampage after his dealings with the U.S. government. Despite a treaty that promised all former Mexican citizens could retain their lands if they chose to become U.S. citizens, nearly two-thirds of the land belonging to former Mexican citizens in northern New Mexico, including the land belonging to Espinosa's family, eventually landed in the hands of U.S. entrepreneurs.

After several years of banditry in the New Mexico, Felipe and his brothers narrowly avoided a team of Colorado soldiers sent from Fort Garland to arrest them and disappeared into the Rocky Mountains in central Colorado, preying on isolated, unguarded communities.

After several failed attempts to capture the elusive outlaws and the death of Felipe's brother Vivian, Fort Garland Commander S.B. Tappan enlisted the help of tracker Tom Tobin to bring the reign of terror in Colorado to an end. After three days, Tobin delivered the heads of Felipe and his cousin Jose to Tappan at Fort Garland.

What became of Felipe's head is the stuff of legend. Citing a 1980's newspaper article titled "Where is Felipe's head?" — but failing to provide details about the publisher — Espinosa researcher Adams James Jones wrote that Felie's head reportedly floated in a jar of alcohol on the desk of the editor of the Fairplay Flume, and was later housed in the offices of the Rocky Mountain News. Jones also wrote that he was told by several Colorado Capitol employees that a preserved head was discovered in the building's basement, but was subsequently incinerated.

Did Hitler own land in U.S.?

By STEVE HARVEY

(Credit: LexisNexis / Los Angeles Times)

Hitler's Colorado Ranch

The 1976 People's Almanac was the first to suggest that Adolf Hitler owned a 9,000-acre ranch in Colorado as of 1942. Almanac authors Irving Wallace and David Wallechinsky wrote, "The mayor of Kit Carson, Colo., revealed that Hitler inherited the grazing land from relatives in Germany."

While Hitler did reportedly have a fascination with cowboys and the U.S. – he even learned to lasso – there are conflicting reports about whether he ever technically owned the rights to a place to hang his hat in or around Kit Carson.

"Colorado Curiosities" author Pam Grout seems to back up the original report, writing in 2006 that Hitler obtained the ranch by confiscating a $20,000 mortgage note from a German family that had inherited the Colorado ranch from a U.S. relative, and that after the U.S. declared war on Germany, the government reclaimed the ranch and eventually sold it to a New Mexico man. Grout also reported that Hitler's name appears in the abstract property listings in Cheyenne County.

That very well may be true. Or at the very least, it seems Los Angeles Times reporter Stever Harvey wouldn't disagree with parts of Grout's report.

In Harvey's 1976 investigative piece, he reported that Joyce Escudero, then-publisher of the Range Ledger, believed that the rumors about Hitler's ranch ownership may have stemmed from a strange court action filed in 1940 by Spears Havely, a Virginia man. Havely was the owner of $23 million in overdue German bonds, and when he learned a resident of Richhausen, Germany owned 13,00 acres of land in eastern Colorado, Havely attempted to claim ownership of the land as a "partial reparation."

The language used in Havely's legal claim, which might very well appear in the property listings cited by Grout, may have "contained a reference to land owned by citizens of Adolph Hilter's Reich," according to a 1976 story in the Range Ledger. "Perhaps in the mind of a courthouse worker somewhere, the words 'citizens of' faded out," the newspaper report concluded.

Fodor Glava's headstone in the Lafayette Municipal Cemetery (Credit: FindAGrave.com / MsTreeMaker)

A Transylvanian in Lafayette

Not only did Theodore "Fodor" Glava have the misfortune of living in the U.S. during the 1918 flu epidemic, which led to his untimely demise at age 43, the Transylvania immigrant also shared a hometown with the fictional ancestors of the "Twilight" series.

This has moved more than a few to visit the former coal miner's grave site in the northwest corner of the Lafayette Municipal Cemetery. Glava is buried in the cemetery's pauper field alongside James Trandofir, who likely also died of the flu.

And yes, you guessed it: Local legend is that Glava was a tall, thin man with dark hair and long fingernails who often wore a trench coat, and therefore was most certainly a vampire.

Adding to the intrigue is the tree that has grown out of the middle of the grave. According to Ron Franscell, author of "The Crime Buff's Guide to the Outlaw Rocky Mountains," local legend has it that the tree is said to have grown from a spike that was hammered into Glava's heart. You know, just to make sure he was dead.

Franscell also wrote salt is often seen sprinkled around the crude headstone, a traditional ritual to keep evil spirits from escaping a grave.

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Confused, delayed, tragic response to 911 call on Sudbury boat accident prompts push for inquest | Toronto Star

thestar.com

Dispatcher in 2013 crash struggled to locate caller despite map sent from phone, and advice on signal fire turned disastrous.

/ COURTESY ROB DORZEK Rob Dorzek, pictured here with his girlfriend Stephanie Bertrand, was the lone survivor in a boat crash near Sudbury that killed three people. Their families and others are calling for a coroner's inquest, saying the response time was too long and crucial mistakes were made by dispatchers who told Dorzek to build a signal fire which would ultimately be responsible for one of the deaths.

The sole survivor of a boat crash on Sudbury's Lake Wanapitei phoned 911 to get help for himself and his three friends but instead wound up enduring an hour-long rescue effort on the line with a dispatcher who struggled to figure out his location despite being sent a map that pinpointed it through GPS.

Over the course of that hour, as Rob Dorzek held his unconscious girlfriend in his arms, the dispatcher instructed him to start a signal fire that accidentally spread in the dry conditions, igniting the boat and killing his friend, Michael Kritz, as Dorzek attempted to stanch the flames.

The events chronicled in an internal government report obtained by the Star and recounted by family members, a survivor and officials have raised startling questions about the effectiveness of the response to the boat accident on June 30, 2013, that ultimately claimed the lives of three young adults.

An internal report from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care documents a timeline rife with confusion and delays, noting there were "communication issues" between the branches of emergency response throughout the call.

Nickel Belt MPP France Gélinas, who represents that area of Sudbury, said the accident has left a lot of people feeling they cannot count on 911 for help. "We need to reassure people that, no matter where you live, when you dial 911 rescue will come."

The families of the dead are calling for an inquest to determine what was done wrong — a request that the provincial coroner's office is still deliberating. Dr. David Eden, the regional coroner for Sudbury, is expected to release a decision this week on whether he will call an inquest.

Stephanie Bertrand, 25, and Matthew Humeniuk, 33, died as a result of injuries from the accident. Kritz, 34, was killed when the small signal fire lit by Dorzek at the 911 dispatcher's suggestion set nearby underbrush aflame and eventually reached the boat.

"We believe that if emergency services had not been contacted that night, it is very likely that there would have been more survivors of this accident, since according to the coroner's report 'but for the fire' Michael 'would most likely have survived,' " said Toni Kritz, Michael's sister.

"This would obviously indicate serious flaws with the emergency response system in our area," said Kritz. "We would therefore suggest that the public should be fully informed of the circumstances of the deaths in this case in order to make known, and thereby attempt to correct, the shortfalls of our current emergency services system."

From left to right: Matthew Humeniuk, Michael Kritz and Stephanie Bertrand. A survivor and officials have raised questions about the effectiveness of the response to the boat accident that claimed the lives of these three young adults.

The Health Ministry report obtained by the Star includes recommendations such as enhanced training for dispatchers, more scripted questions to help them determine the location of a caller and a suggestion that local dispatch centres develop search-and-rescue plans with local agencies. The internal report commends the work of the dispatchers who handled the call.

Dorzek placed his first call to 911 at 12:30 a.m., according to the ministry report's timeline. The rescue boat did not leave until 1:30 a.m. and was able to locate the accident scene in eight minutes.

In an interview with the Star, Dorzek said that within minutes of his first call he sent the dispatcher a picture from his phone of a map that clearly showed his location near the town of Skead, where a rescue boat was stationed. Yet rescue crews would not reach him for another hour.

"To anyone involved, even the volunteer firefighters who would have been involved, you show it to any one of them and just because they're from that area, they know where that accident was, just from that blue dot on a big map," said Dorzek, 29.

The four people were on their way to a party, having spent the evening together with drinks on one of the islands in the lake. Dorzek remembers seeing both Humeniuk and Kritz standing, looking over the windscreen before the boat struck a small island, less than 10 minutes from Tony's Marina — a facility owned by Kritz's family where the rescue boat was stationed. The pair were lifelong boaters.

"Everyone says the only reason they hit that thing they hit was because it was so dark. They were just a few feet more to one side than they should have been," said Dorzek.

The coroner's autopsy of the bodies found that Humeniuk, the driver of the boat, had a blood-

alcohol level that "would be expected to cause substantial impairment and which significantly exceeded legal limits for operation of a boat." Dorzek said he disagreed with the finding and that he did not feel unsafe getting in the boat prior to the accident.

Dorzek was knocked unconscious when the boat struck land. He came to inside the small front cabin. He tried to pull his girlfriend, Bertrand, out through a hole in the damaged boat. He was in frequent contact with the 911 call centre, located in downtown Sudbury, during the hour-long rescue effort, though the signal on his cellphone sometimes cut out.

The dispatcher immediately scrambled two ambulances on land, according to the report, but Rob Hyndman, president of the Sudbury Professional Firefighters Association, told the Star that the fire crew needed to operate the rescue boat did not learn about the emergency from the dispatcher but through a chance encounter.

The force's platoon chief that night, Terry Larocque, was at a burning house in another part of the municipality around 12:50 a.m. An EMS worker watching fire remarked to Larocque that he must be having a busy night and mentioned the accident on Lake Wanapitei. Larocque appeared not have heard about the accident through regular channels.

"(Larocque) is basically the senior officer responsible for the fire department on-shift," said Hyndman. "He would have access to all the information of all the calls that are going on all throughout the city. Under the normal circumstances he would have had that information coming through his radio."

Larocque immediately rallied the volunteer firefighters in Skead, said Hyndman.

Bob Humeniuk, Matt's father, was among them but stayed on shore while others went out on the boat, Dorzek said.

The ministry report shows firefighters got to the rescue boat at 1 a.m. but were told by dispatchers not to leave until met by the paramedics. It took the paramedics another 20 minutes to find the rescue boat, according to the report. According to its chronology, the paramedics, despite being in the area since Dorzek's call came in, had difficulty locating the marina.

"There were communication issues throughout the call between the allied agencies, such as fire communications not confirming that a fire boat was available in Skead and not providing information as to its location. When fire communications told (a dispatcher) at approximately 00:59 hours that the firefighters are at the boat launch, fire communications did not say where the boat was located and (the dispatcher) did not ask," the report says.

Meanwhile, the dispatcher instructed Dorzek to start a signal fire on the island. He was still holding onto his girlfriend, Bertrand, who he had been trying to free from the boat.

"When (the dispatcher) demanded that I start the fire, I told her I can't because it means I have to let go of Stephanie," said Dorzek. "She insisted that was the only way we're going to get help. That's what she said. So I had to go do it."

He took a cushion from the boat to the other shore of the small island and set it on fire. For a time the fire burned small and bright but then it spread to the underbrush. Dorzek tried to fight it back with a wet T-shirt but the flames reached the boat and the fibreglass hull quickly went up. He managed to pull Bertrand free, but Humeniuk and Kritz were still inside.

“That’s when the worst thing you’ll ever hear happened. For about an eight- to ten-second period, Mike (Kritz) screamed and then stopped,” said Dorzek. “Just moments later is when finally the fire boat showed up. The fire probably wouldn’t have been a bad thing if there were no delays, but even in this case they should never have talked me into turning the scene of an accident like that into the bonfire it turned out to be.”

The autopsy report of Kritz’s body found that he suffered a broken rib and contused lung in the accident — survivable injuries, according to his sister Toni.

“It was (June), so dry season. It was windy. (Rob’s) telling her there’s a boat crashed up on the shore full of fuel and she tells him to light a fire,” she said. “I don’t believe that was a reasonable option.”

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EBR coroner carves up turkey contest | WBRZ News 2 Louisiana : Baton Rouge, LA |

wbrz.com

Posted: Nov 26, 2014 4:43 PM by **Russell Jones**
Updated: Nov 26, 2014 4:43 PM
Source: WBRZ

BATON ROUGE - The St. Vincent De Paul Turkey Carving Contest was won by a parish coroner this year.

Dr. William "Beau" Clark took the prize for best carved bird at the annual Thanksgiving competition, which involves numerous elected officials.

Past carving champs Hillar Moore, the parish district attorney, and D. D. Breaux, LSU gymnastics head coach, took second and third place.

A spokesperson for St. Vincent De Paul said the EBR Coroner's Office helps support their year-round prescription recovery and donation program.

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Coroner resigns after being banned from crime scenes

WBIR Staff and Evan Johnson, WBIR

wbir.com

Judge orders Cocke County Coroner Terry Jarnigan to stay away from crime scenes, not touch bodies.

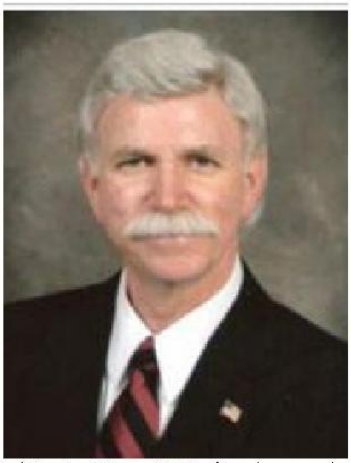
635538308457919609-cocke-county-courthouse

Cocke County Courthouse

After what he did to a dead man's body last month, Coroner Terry Jarnigan better stay away from any and all crime scenes and dead bodies in Cocke County.

That's the ruling from Cocke County Circuit Court Judge Ben Hooper, following a request for help by Fourth Judicial District Attorney General James "Jimmy" Dunn's office.

10News learned Jarnigan signed his letter of resignation late Tuesday, which goes into effect immediately, according to Cocke County Mayor Crystal Ottinger.



(Photo: Tenn DA's Conference)

James "Jimmy" Dunn

Hooper on Monday signed an order for permanent injunctive relief barring the coroner from disturbing or touching dead bodies, touching evidence or going to crime scenes. Coroners often go to scenes and view bodies as part of their work.

Jarnigan, however, has been going too far, according to court documents.

Last month, according to records, he stuck his finger Nov. 2 into the head wound of a shooting victim.

According to an affidavit from Cocke County law officers, Jarnigan showed up at Newport Medical Center. Authorities were just beginning their investigation into the death of the suspect, who had been found with a gunshot wound to the head.

"At the scene it appeared that the death was a suicide, however I sought approval form the District Attorney's Office to have the body autopsied to help to confirm whether the death was a suicide or homicide," according to an affidavit from Cocke County Sheriff's Lt. Robert Thornton.

While examining the body, Jarnigan stuck two fingers into the place where a bullet had exited victim's head. When he realized there was brain matter on his fingers, he put it back into the wound, according to the affidavit, making a comment like, "Oh, brains."

According to Detective Paula Wilson, who also was at the hospital, she was about to take forensic photos of the victim to better help the investigation. Jarnigan was told that the body would be sent out for an autopsy and that a test to check for gunshot residue also had been requested.

It's typical practice to refrain from altering a body in an investigation to prevent spoiling potential evidence.

According to Wilson, Jarnigan "began twisting his finger around" in the head wound. Wilson stated she left the room at that point.

Deputy District Attorney General Brownlow Marsh alleges in documents filed Nov. 19 that Jarnigan shows up uninvited at crime scenes and contaminates evidence.

Jarnigan did not attend Monday's hearing before Hooper, according to court records.

County coroners work under the auspices of counties in Tennessee.

Cocke County's medical examiner is Dr. David McConnell. As medical examiner, it's his job to request determine cause of death.

Some counties use coroners; some do not.

In 1977, while known as Terry Lackey, Jarnigan was convicted among other felony counts of "willful injury by explosives" and arson and detonation of explosives with intent to harm a person. He eventually changed his name to Terry Jarnigan.

In 2002, Jarnigan petitioned for restoration of citizenship rights that he lost with his felony convictions.

In restoring the rights, the court found that he had "sustained and maintained the character of a person of honesty, integrity, respectability and veracity." The court also noted he was a "family man, a longtime member of the Rescue Squad, Squad Man of the Year 2001 and has been appointed in the coroner position of Cocke County, Tennessee," according to records.

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'Blood scent' chemical which Count Dracula and predatory animals can't resist is identified

mirror.co.uk

- Nov 10, 2014 19:00
- By John von Radowitz

Wild dogs and tigers have the same reaction as the Count to the smell of blood - or more precisely, the organic 'aldehyde' compound called trans-4,5-epoxy-(E)-2-decenal

A single chemical component of blood creates the pungent metallic scent Count Dracula found so irresistible, research has shown.

In Bram Stoker's original vampire novel, the sharp-toothed Count can hardly contain himself when his guest, Jonathan Harker, cuts himself shaving.

Now scientists know what the undead aristocrat was reacting to - an organic "aldehyde" compound called trans-4,5-epoxy-(E)-2-decenal.

In tests with zoo animals, lumps of wood impregnated with the lab-made chemical triggered a strong response from African and Asian wild dogs, South American bush dogs, and Siberian tigers.

On its own, the compound produced the same reactions - sniffing, licking, biting, pawing and toying - as horse blood.

The carnivores were not bothered with logs coated with fruit essence or a near-odourless solvent.

Tigers were lured most strongly by the blood compound while South American bush dogs lost interest more quickly than other species.

Lead scientist Professor Matthias Laska, from Linkoping University in Sweden, said: "For predators, food scents are particularly attractive, and much of this has to do with blood.

"We wanted to find out which chemical components create the scent of blood."

Prior to the research, little information existed on the substances that give blood its smell.

Sophisticated chemical analysis techniques eventually identified 30 candidate compounds, any of which could have been what Prof Laska was searching for.

It took the sensitive noses of human scent experts to single out the elusive aldehyde, which they recognised as emitting the distinctive metallic odour typically associated with blood.

The animals tests, conducted at Kolmarden Wildlife Park in Sweden, proved it was this that attracted meat-eating predators.

"How this has developed through evolution is an interesting question," said Prof Laska. "Perhaps there is a common denominator for all mammalian blood."

The research is published in the online journal Public Library of Science ONE.

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Cowboy Coffee

Arbuckles, bean juice, joe—whatever the name, just make it strong.

By Laurel Miller
http://www.americancowboy.com/article/cowboy-coffee

There are many things that a cowboy can do without. Coffee is not one of them. There are several variations on technique, but most methods call for boiling water, adding grounds, and re-boiling, before repeating the process. Since no filter is used, various field recipes—see below—are employed to make the grounds sink. Who knew that albumin residue from egg whites "clarifies," or coagulates, the grounds and makes them settle?

Recipe

• Equal ratio tablespoons of ground coffee to cups of cold water; half the ratio of empty eggshells, crushed (i.e., five eggshells for 10 tablespoons coffee and 10 cups water)

Or for larger groups:

• 1 1/ 2 cups of ground coffee to four quarts (one gallon) of water, and one eggshell.

Cold Water Infusion

This is the easiest and most popular method.

Throw grounds into water, and bring to a slow boil; immediately remove from fire (allowing coffee to boil will result in an acrid, burnt taste), and steep for one minute. Add eggshells, and allow grounds to settle. Right before serving, add a bit of cold water to the pot to further settle grounds.

Dave Dohnel, owner of Frontier Pack Train based in California's High Sierras, says this method is also the best to use at high altitude, where cold water is plentiful. Bonus: cold water doesn't extract the essential oils from the beans and also allows the grounds to steep longer.

The Morning After Method

Take pot of grounds from night before, add water, bring to a boil; remove from fire. Add fresh grounds and follow above instructions.

Dohnel, like many camp cooks, allows the grounds to build up in his coffee pot. "It's just retread," he says. "Reheat the grounds from the previous night(s), and drink it the next morning [to save time and energy]. It'll put hair on your chest!"

The Sock Method

Also known as "hobo" or "open-pot" coffee, this calls for putting the grounds into a (clean) sock and chucking it into the coffee pot. Bring to boil, and follow same preparation instructions as above (minus the eggshells). If you'd rather not use one of your socks, use a muslin bag or a commercially made coffee sock. Let steep until desired strength is achieved.

Cattle truck overturns spilling calves onto Turnpike at Yeehaw...

Posted: 7:45 a.m. Wednesday, Dec. 10, 2014 wftv.com

Thursday, Dec. 11, 2014 | 12:56 a.m.

Cattle truck crash on Turnpike at Yeehaw Junction

Cattle truck crash on Turnpike at Yeehaw Junction

OSCEOLA COUNTY, Fla. —

Cattle had caused the north and southbound lanes of the Turnpike to shut down at Yeehaw Junction and US-192 Wednesday, but the roadway has since reopened.

Authorities said a tractor-trailer hauling about 130 calves overturned on the northbound inside shoulder of the Florida Turnpike at mile marker 231 in Osceola County.

As a result of the crash, many calves were loose on the northbound and southbound lanes of the Turnpike.

The northbound and southbound lanes were closed for the safety of the responders attempting to herd the calves from the travel lanes and for the public to prevent collisions with the cattle.

The driver of the tractor-trailer suffered minor injuries.

Osceola Animal Control assisted with the calves, and the tractor-trailer owner brought in additional cattle trucks.

About an hour later and about a half-mile from the first crash, a FedEx truck traveling southbound failed to slow down and crashed into another tractor-trailer, resulting in a collision involving three tractor-trailers and one car.

Authorities said at some point there was a fuel spill as well.

Six people had non-life-threatening injuries.

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Cruise ship diners may be throwing lobsters overboard to 'save' animals

foxnews.com

Cruise ship passengers may be trying to save their lobster dinner. (iStock)

Fisherman on England's Northern coast have been finding a curious catch in their nets recently—Canadian lobster.

The Homarus Americanus is native to the Atlantic ocean, just off the North American coast—3,500 miles away from the U.K. Are the lobsters just taking a leisurely swim across the pond?

According to fishery experts, no.

Researchers now believe passengers aboard Atlantic-crossing cruise ships have actually been buying live lobsters and, in a misguided effort of animal rights activism, throwing them overboard in an effort to save the crustaceans, reports the Daily Mail. Many of the lobsters caught still have the rubber bands around the their claws, according to local fishermen.

"In the past we have heard one officer on the watch talking to another on the cruise ship saying some of the passengers were going to buy lobsters and release them, thinking they were doing good," Gary Redshaw, a skipper who has found the foreign lobster species in British waters, told the Yorkshire Post.

"But in fact they can do a lot of damage. I think it's a good idea to study them as they could be giving English lobsters a disease."

The North American lobsters are unable to breed with local lobster species and usually die quickly in the unfamiliar habitat. Experts also warn that the two new species could bring more harm to local lobster populations.

"They are usually Canadian lobster as they are cheap. But the chances of them being established are very rare," Mike Cohen, Chief Executive of the Holderness Fishing Industry Group said. "They won't last much longer than if the passengers had eaten them for dinner."

Foreign "marine litter" was blamed for wiping out a native English oyster a few years ago.

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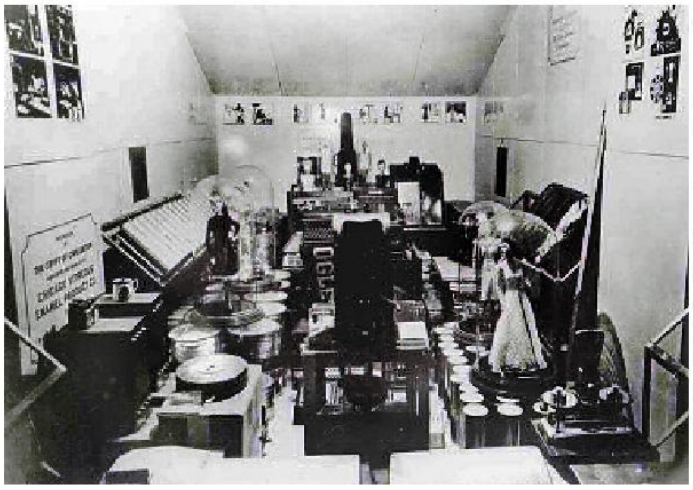
The world's first time capsule lies behind a welded steel door in Atlanta



Just before the door was shut on the Crypt of Civilization.

The Crypt of Civilization at Oglethorpe University in Atlanta, Georgia, is widely considered to be the first conventional time capsule intended to be opened on a specific date in the future. That date is May 28, 8113.

If you accept the premise that the Egyptian Calendar, created in the year 4241 BC, marked the first fixed date in the history of man, then the year 1936, when the crypt was conceived, would represent the exact midpoint of recorded human history.

The crypt is 20' x 10' x 10', sealed with a stainless steel door that has been welded shut. Its contents, inventoried at the crypt's official web site, include microfilms of 800 "authoritative books on every subject of importance known to mankind" and 200 works of fiction. Also:

5 phonograph records (transcriptions) 2 bird records (songs of birds) 3 records in album 5 records (miscellaneous) General Gannett and Acompo 8 records 1 transcription (Premier of Canada) phonograph records in 2 boxes - History of Mines - 37 10" records, 2 12" records 1 container of beer (about one quart) 1 plastic bird, 1 plastic ash tray 1 beetle plastic ornament and bowl 1 vanity make-up mirror with light 11 miscellaneous recordings 6 recordings (Artie Shaw) 6 recordings (Richard Himber) 1 plastic savings bank 3 plastic pieces (miscellaneous) 1 plastic display case for watch 1 set Lionel model train (6 cars, I track) 1 cigarette holder 1 model air conditioner apparatus 1 box of eight plastic samples 1 set of scales (hand) 1 Ingraham pocket watch 1 Regen's cigarette lighter 1 Ingraham wrist watch (woman's) 1 sample of gold mesh 1 Gen-A-Lite flashlight 1 Toastolator (electric) 1 Monroe calculator 1 set Lincoln Logs (toys) 1 mannikin (female) in glass case 1 mannikin (male) in glass case 1 telephone instrument dial phone (desk type) 10 samples of textile upholstery 4 samples plated plastics 1 3-cell flash light Audio Scriptions (2 records of Dr. Jacobs' voice) 1 pencil painting 1 cut and 2 illustrations from cut 1 set Helios (game board and pieces) 2 carved glass panels 1 set Bridgeomatic (game) 2 micro-film readers and 2 micro-films (Oglethorpe Book of Georgia Verse) 1 obstetrical model (2 pieces) 1 set graduates (sealed) 1 Micarta gear 1 package containing 6 miniature panties, 5 miniature shirts, 3 drawers 1 sample plastic radio case 2 Lennox china vases, 1 blue china bowl 1 Emerson radio 1 sample of aluminum foil 1 sample technicolor film on display card 1 abrasive wheel (Aloxite) 4 skeins of rayon, 1 electric iron 2 electric lighting fixtures and 2 acetate shades 1 set of binoculars in leather case

1 recording transcription, King Gustav of Sweden 6 transcriptions "We, the People" radio show 1 Kodak (small) camera 1 plastic drinking glass holder 1 sample of catlinite 1 Schick Electric Razor (set) 1 sample of Lucite 1 Comptometer, Ser. no. J246635 2 ashtrays, plastic forms of gears 1 package Butterick dress patterns 1 DuPrene glove (rubber substitute) 1 set silver plate 1847 Rogers, I knife, 1 fork, 1 spoon 1 copy of The New York Herald-Tribune (especially prepared copy) 1 Masonic deposit (5 badges, I metal plaque in case, sealed) 1 glass jar containing 2 pen holders, 3 pencils, 1 slide rule and instructions, 1 set colored crayons, 1 plastic ruler, 1 fountain pen and pencil set, 6 corks 1 glass refrigerator dish and cover 1 Mazda lamp exhibit (component parts) 1 model Edison's original and 1 Mazda lamp 1 package assorted wearing apparel 1 package samples of laces and ribbons 1 pair ladies stockings 1 package - 1 towel, 3 washcloths 1 framed painting (roses reproduction) 1 framed picture (reproduction, painting of a house) 1 package containing 6 wood and plastic pictures 1 rafia covered glass powder jar 1 sample of soap (figure of a bull) 1 package assorted hair pins 1 package containing 6 pieces, assorted costume jewelry 1 glass jar containing miscellaneous ornaments and 4 berets, 1 hair net, 1 clip 1 glass jar containing 1 hair bow, 1 gem razor, 1 package blades, 1 shaving brush, 2 powder puffs, 2 compacts, 3 samples powder, 1 eyebrow brush, 3 lipsticks, 1 hair remover, 1 toothbrush, 1 rouge, 1 nail brush, 1 ivory stick, 1 pair manicure scissors, 1 eyelash curler, 5 hair curlers, 1 package dental floss, 1 pair tweezers, 1 package Mallene, 1 package corn pads eye cup, 1 set artificial finger nails, 1 set artificial eyelashes, 1 package playing cards, 1 set Bridge tally cards 1 package containing 2 combs, 1 change carrier, 1 package of paper cleaning pads, 1 identification book, 1 pair dark glasses, 1 lady's comb, 4 pair shoe laces, 2 pair shoulder straps, 1 flashlight, 2 dice, 1 cigar holder, 1 cigarette holder 1 package containing 5 spools of silk thread, 1 crochet hook, 1 thimble, 2 packages needles, 2 packages rickrack, 2 packages bias binding 1 package of samples oil cloth 1 lady's breast form 1 package cellophane dish covers, 3 belts, 1 package 2nd carbon copy of teletype news 1 yellow china bowl, 7 "What-Not" ornaments, 1 package picture hooks, curtain rings and ends, 1 napkin and napkin ring 6 packages wooden forks and spoons set toy paints, 1 tea bowl, 1 package fish hooks, 1 package drapery pins, 1 June bug spinner, 1 package curtain rings, 1 fly, 2 toy watches, 1 pocket knife 2 smoking pipes, 1 bottle Vaseline 1 porcelain figure, 2 small glass ornaments, glass coal scuttle 1 small glass vase, 1 glass teakettle 1 package paper clips, 1 package cellophane ribbon, 1 set measuring spoons, 1 doughnut cutter, 1 plastic salt and pepper shaker set, plastic picture frame, 1 set Curtain holdbacks 1 toy whistle, 1 golfball, 1 cake of soap 1 cover for milk bottle, 1 plastic knife, fork and spoon, 1 salad fork and spoon 1 funnel, 1 barometer, 1 glass container and cover, 1 scouring pad, 1 package of marbles, 3 outlets, 1 socket plug, 1 switch, 1 Pull chain socket, 3 house numbers, 1 rule, 1 can opener 1 carving knife and fork, 1 rule, 1 screwdriver 1 grapefruit corer, 1 potato masher, 1 ladle, 1 spoon, 1 pancake turner 1 asbestos mat, 1 red china plate 1 glass bookend (girl's head) 1 toy automobile, 1 toy stagecoach, 1 image of Buddha (incense burner) 1 small china plate, 1 small china bowl, 1 glass rolling pin, 1 package rayon chemicals 1 piece sheet music, 1 sample of mahogany treated with bakelite varnish orange reamer and bowl, 1 glass water bottle for refrigerator, 1 package paper drinking cups 1 coffee set (drip coffee maker, cream and sugar), 1 cream and sugar set, 1 flower holder, 2 Pyrex dishes, 1 covered china bowl, 5 drinking glasses, 1 wine glass 1 whiskey glass jigger, 1 liquor measure (jigger and cup), 1 vase, 1 set measuring cups, 4 red glass goblets, 1 Willow ware cup and saucer, 1 pottery

bowl, 1 kitchen brush, 1 toilet brush 1 candlestand (candle and globe), 1 package soap and miscellaneous items (sealed) 1 sales ticket register, 1 Detrola radio 1 fishing rod, 1 badminton set and net 1 package fly swatter, coat hanger, etc. 1 assortment of cuff links, buttons, etc. (sealed), 8 packages assorted buttons 5 handkerchiefs, and silk scarves 1 Yankee screwdriver, 1 screwdriver and special screws 12 packages Rayon-Component parts and displays, 1 watt-hour meter, 1 tube rayon thread, 1 set of 6 radio tubes 1 toy pistol, 1 pinball game, 1 toy airplane 1 Negro doll, 1 toy flying gyro, 1 wrecker 1 toy greyhound bus, 1 tractor, 2 dolls (white), 1 1-one Ranger, 1 ambulance 1 Donald Duck, 1 set toy tools, 1 toy tank, 1 pacifier, 1 bubble pipe, 1 rattle 1 toy equestrian, 18 toy soldiers, 12 toy civilians, 1 toy cannon, 2 muses, 1 anti-aircraft gun, 1 set samples of better ware 1 blotter, 1 inkwell (sealed) 1 DuPrene sample (artificial rubber) 1 sample ILICite (plastic) 1 sample textile (cotton), 1 sample of rayon cloth 1 auto-point pencil, 8 Voca-films 1 transcription (Roosevelt, 11 parts) 1 transcription (King Edward VIII) 1 package Masonite (sealed) 1 denture (Lipper), 1 box samples of Micarta (sealed), 1 box samples of carpets, 1 crystalite, 10 rings 5 Iconoscape television tubes Spectacle frames, buckles, 8 auto handles, bottle caps, beads, 22 miscellaneous plastic samples, 9 color samples tennite, 1 sample insulation, 1 distributor head cover, 1 thermometer case 1 instrument panel, 7 samples Formica 14 samples Formica (set) 1 set A-C spark plugs (sealed) 1 plastic flute

Edited by:wythe (Editor)Dylan (Admin)Josh (Admin)

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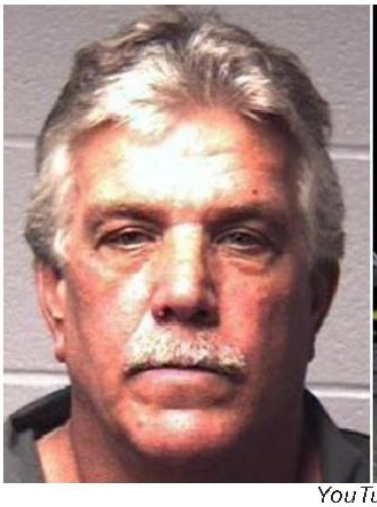
Dad accused of killing stepdaughter to film himself 'having sex with her corpse'

mirror.co.uk

- Dec 07, 2014 14:48
- By Sophia Rahman

Police claim Gregory R Graf shot 33-year-old Jessica Padgett in the head before committing a sex act with her body



YouTube

Alleged crimes: Graf is accused of shooting his stepdaughter in the head so he could have sex with her dead body

A father is accused of murdering his stepdaughter then filming himself having sex with her corpse.

Prosecutors said the video confirmed that Gregory R Graf killed Jessica Padgett so he could have sex with her body.

Authorities said Graf told officers on the day he was charged with murdering Ms Padgett, 33, that he wanted to sleep with her and did so after she was dead.

The 53-year-old, of Allen Township, Philadelphia, is accused of shooting Ms Padgett in the back of the head on November 21.

He is also suspected of hiding her body on his property while family and friends searched for her.

Ms Padgett, of Whitehall Township, went missing the same day after leaving Duck Duck Goose Child Care in Northampton, US.

John Morganelli, Northampton County District Attorney, declined to say what the video showed when speaking to Philadelphia news website Philly.com.

However he reportedly confirmed that it showed Graf committing a variety of sexual acts against the woman's body.

Mr Morganelli said he allowed an 'abuse-of-corpse' charge to be filed against Graf, but he could not pursue a death penalty because the alleged sexual abuse was committed after Ms Padgett was killed.

The district attorney claimed police discovered Graf's cannabis-growing operation as they searched for Ms Padgett.

De Situ Brittaniae

In 1747 word of a major new historical discovery reached England. Charles Bertram (1723-65), a 24-year-old English teacher in Denmark, had found an ancient manuscript and accompanying map, titled *De Situ Brittaniae*, that detailed the layout of roads and settlements in Roman Britain.

The material caused a buzz of excitement amongst antiquarians because it revealed numerous Roman landmarks whose existence had not been previously known and suggested the existence of an entire unknown Roman province. But in fact, the map and manuscript turned out to be one of the greatest forgeries of the century.

The fraud began when Bertram wrote to William Stukeley (1687-1765), a famous British antiquarian, informing him of the existence of the manuscript and map. With encouragement from Stukeley, Bertram made a "careful copy" of the material and sent it to Stukeley. The original was never sent (and never seen).

Stukeley then published a monograph theorizing that the map was the work of a 14th century monk from Westminster named Richard of Cirencester. For over one hundred years, this theory went unquestioned until the German historian Karl Wex discovered that much of the manuscript had been lifted from a variety of 16th century sources. In 1866 B.R. Woodward and J.E.B. Mayer published a more thorough debunking of the map, revealing it to be based upon "a mosaic of information collected from Caesar, Tacitus, Solinus, Camden and other authorities."

In hindsight it then became obvious that the manuscript and map were amateurish forgeries. It was only the authority of Stukeley that had lent them credence.

In the meantime, information gleaned from *De Situ Brittaniae* had made its way into an enormous variety of sources, including history books and maps of the British Royal Ordnance Survey. It took decades to correct all this information and finally set the historical record straight.

- Mark Jones (ed.), Fake? The Art of Deception, University of California Press, 1990: page 66.

via Feedburner

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SANDERS COUNTY

Will Wadley, KECI Weekend Anchor,
POSTED: 4:04 PM Dec 10 2014 UPDATED: 5:04 PM Dec 10 2014

MISSOULA, Mont. -

In Sanders County, a picture of a dead coyote hanging from a tree in Plains is stirring up controversy on Facebook.

Plains residents started noticing the dead coyote, hung with a red bow near a public road, a few days ago. We're told it is hung on a bus route, and that it's also in an area known for its Christmas decorations.

Plains resident Mary Ellen Siegford, who posted the picture to a Sanders County public yard sale group on Facebook, says her daughter started crying when she saw it, but she says reaction on Facebook has been mixed.

"A lot of people were just like, 'Well, be glad it's dead. You don't have to worry about it eating your pets,'" said Siegford. “But I don't know. To me, it's morbid, it rings of animal cruelty. It's just not very pleasant to drive past, and I feel it's pretty gruesome for the school kids to be passing by on their way to and from school."

Morbid or not, according to Sanders County Sheriff Tom Rummel, the hanging animal is perfectly legal.

He says it's on private property, a coyote is a predator -- not a game animal -- and because the coyote in question is already dead, it’s not an issue of animal cruelty.

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Dearg-Due: The Legend of The Irish Vampire and The Birth of a Deadly Blood Sucker

by Gabriel Wilson 437 Followers
12 days ago from Whangarei, Northland Level 1 Commenter

hubpages.com

There are many tales of Irish demons sucking the life blood from the living. Ugly bat like creatures lurking in the dead of the night. Pale faced with long yellow nails and gaping purple mouths. Sour breath and bloodied hollow eye sockets. Stories that date back to pre celtic times. Perhaps these tales of demons were simply told to entertain during long winter nights. Perhaps parents told stories to scare their children so they wouldn't wonder too far from their camp. Or perhaps these tales were far more than just stories. Do blood sucking demons exist? Is there really such a thing as vampires? Of course we may never know...

Unless we are one...

An old Irish legend tells the story of a beautiful Irish maiden who was deeply in love with a common peasant boy. Their love was pure and true. The maiden, we will call her Órga and the peasant boy, we will call him Grian had promised to love each other till their death. They talked of when they'd marry and the children they would bare.

Órga's father had very different ideas. He had promised the hand of his beautiful daughter to a rich Clan Chieftain. Her father was promised wealth and lands for himself and his other children in exchange for his daughter's hand in marriage.

It is said that Órga's beauty shone like a ray of sunshine; her eyes sparkled like midnight stars and her lips were redder than the reddest rose. Throughout the lands people talked of her exquisite beauty. Men were besotted with her every move and women would try to steal a strand of her golden hair.

To Órga's and Grian's dismay the marriage was planned and the day was set. Poor Órga's pleas feel on deaf ears. The wedding day arrived. Órga dressed in an array of gold and red, met and married her future husband. Everyone partied till nightfall. Órga looked on, cursing her father and promising vengeance.

Órga's husband was a horrible, mean and conceited man. He treated her like an object. Her days of playing in the meadows and fishing in the rivers were over. He locked her away so only he could feast on her magnificent beauty. The evil man relished in keeping her all to himself. Órga despaired at being locked away in the dark. Hidden from everything she loved. She couldn't eat, she couldn't drink. Distraught, she wondered of her faith!

Stories say, she poisoned herself no longer able to live the life her father had put upon her. Other stories say she died of a broken heart.

Órga's burial was a simple affair. Her husband took another wife, while her body was still warm in her earthy bed. Her father and siblings were so busy with their new wealthy lives to cast her a passing thought.

One person however, morned her and cried a river of tears over her grave. The young lover, she had hopped to love for a life time, Grian. He visited her grave and spoke to her of his desire to see her again and prayed for her to come to him.

Legend says she rose from her grave the following year on the very date she died. Riddled with vengeance, she visited her fathers house. Finding him sleeping, she leaned over him and placing her lips gently over his, she sucked every breath of life from him.

Órga then visited her husband. He was engaged in exotic sexual exploits with young women and never noticed his deceased wife enter the room. Órga went into a frenzied attack. Descending on her husband with such angry force, she not only drew is breath but also his blood. The surge of blood through her dead body made her feel alive again. She needed more...

Órga used her beauty to prey on lustful young men. Luring them away to a quiet place with the promise of her beautiful body, only to sink her teeth into their soft throats and drink their delicious blood. Her hunger for blood was all she knew.

So eager was she to quench her thirst that she forgot all about her young love Grian. She never saw him again, and if she had he would only have satisfied her thirst for blood. Órga was consumed with thoughts of the warm red liquid that gave her dead body living strength. With only one night a year to enjoy her lust, Órga feasted like a wild beast. Returning to her grave a bloody corpse.

And so, the legend of The Dearg-Due was born.

Dearg-Due (red blood sucker) was the name given to Órga's wondering remains. Her passion for blood, stripping her of her birth name. In her death as in the last of her living days it seems she was destined to be alone. The story goes, that the remains of Órga are buried at Strongbow's Tree in Co. Waterford in the southeast of Ireland. It is said: the locals pile stones on her grave every year on the eve of her death, thus preventing her from rising and sucking the life blood from their fleshy bones, but... sometimes... lives are busy and sometimes they forget...

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Deathbed confession sends New York family on $4.5m treasure hunt

Jessica Glenza in New York
Wednesday 10 December 2014

theguardian.com

- Edward Giaimo Jr said he had stashed gold and silver but did not say where
- Siblings still fighting over inheritance following 2007 death

A New York City landlord told his siblings, on his deathbed, that he hid $4.5m worth of silver bullion and gold krugerrands – but no one knew where. The confession sent a family into years of litigation and a costly treasure hunt, one still unresolved today.

New York's DNAinfo detailed the saga – a tale of wealth and acrimony – on Wednesday.

Edward Giaimo Jr, a Manhattan lawyer and property owner, told his brother and sister that they would need a truck to move the fortune in metal he had stashed. But in 2007 he died without disclosing the location. Giaimo also left 18 properties in the city's wealthy Upper East Side neighborhood and $48m, a fortune that has fueled years of legal proceedings.

His brother has since claimed in court filings that the krugerrands – South African gold coins – and silver bullion are buried on the family property or kept in an unknown storage facility. While it doesn't appear the warring sides ever found the "treasure", they are still fighting over $10m discovered in Giaimo's house.

The $10m probably came from "skimming rents on subsidized apartments", according to DNAinfo. About $7m was found behind a closet in the attic of a family home, and another $3m was found in an office safe.

View all comments >

- mishaTrotsky

  Nonsense. His last words were "Rosebud."

- shortspin

  How big is the closet that you can hide $7m behind it?

  - J. Thomas Williamson shortspin

    That 155 pounds of 100 dollar bills will fit in the bottom of a linen closet . less than 8 cubic feet or there about . Not a lot of space as a mater of fact.

- Marshdweller

  Hilarious. Sounds like he knew this is how they would behave. The money probably doesn't even exist.

- Steve Dutch Marshdweller

  It's under (gasp) the Big W (gasp, ack).

  First one to get that reference gets a kewpie doll.

  - Marshdweller Steve Dutch

    It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World. I claim my prize!
    Used to watch it every Christmas as a kid.

- MartyPrice

To money...the cause of and solution to all of life's problems.
I prefer Homer's version

- WhenInDoubtRoll

This reads like a brother and sister inherited $48m and 18 houses and later found an extra $10m in cash. And now they are fighting over $4.5m? What did I miss?

- Topcat9

It's a mad, mad, mad, mad world!

- changenow22

Ha Ha, bet they've spent more on lawyers than the fortune is worth. Rich people only value money.

- toadwarrior

All that found money should go to the government to punish the dead tax cheat and his greedy family.

  - Tom Termini toadwarrior

    Why. It the tenants who were ripped off? Why should the government get enriched over squabbling siblings? Or better yet, lust let them continue to fight it out - lawyers deserve all the money, apparently.

  - notarussiantroll Tom Termini

    Isn't the government us.

- LMavis

Just how many siblings does he have to make this worth fighting over? Isn't there enough to go round?

- Jamie Richards

"The location....of.....the treasure.....is" beeeeeeeeeep

    - Mawhrin Jamie Richards

    i remember a short story where the treasure hunting family are sent on a wild goose chase only to discover the deceased has turned all his wealth into precious metal - which they then discover has been smelted into a 7x2 foot box ... ie. the 'lead' coffin they just buried him at sea in.

- Bill Willard

If I lived in one of his apartments I'd be breaking out the metal detector and scanning the whole place.

    - salamandertome Bill Willard

    You'd find pipes.

- Nic Crovaix

Sounds like a R.I.P. off.

- Samuel Burns

He probably thought his siblings are arseholes who would squabble like children over his estate, so he made up a bullshit treasure story just to annoy them.

    - salamandertome Samuel Burns

    Yeah, that was my first thought. Let them spend the rest of their lives dissatisfied with what they have, trying to find more wealth that doesn't even exist. On their own deathbeds, they'll probably realise that they could have had happy and fulfilled lives, but they didnt through greed. Perhaps they'll be able to pass this message on?

    - RobDingwall salamandertome

        Perhaps they'll be able to pass this message on?

    I really don't think HELL is a place where you can pass messages on.

- sandyra

Just a mere observation, but since the decedent has spoken about treasure to be had it makes me wonder if the family got a decent metal detector to see if the house is a repository of much metal riches.

- Tom Termini sandyra

  Good and silver are not magnetic.

  - dor35 Tom Termini

    He said metal detector not magnetic detector. There is a difference you know.

- sandyra

wow! What would I do if I found millions just lying around in my relative's house? I certainly would NOT tell anyone about it, especially not the gov't. sheesh!

- DolleDolf

Is this a first world problem? Or a white people problem?

  - ID2883037 DolleDolf

    It's a rich people problem. Where does race come in?

    - RobDingwall ID2883037

      > *Where does race come in?*

      First to find it wins.

- Helicopterman

He's screwing with you, he probably didn't like any of you so he told you about "buried treasure".

- contrary21

A great way to pay back your siblings if you hated them. Send them on a never-ending goose chase that causes fighting and lawsuits for the rest of their lives. Really diabolical.

- flores93

You need stories like that to cheer yourself up after having read any article about the latest Abbott stuff up.

- HumanistLove

Almost parallels the plot of the movie, 'It's a Mad Mad Mad World"....classic 1960s large ensemble cast of characters all racing to a mysterious location to find a buried suitcase full of cash after a dying man's last words confessing his hidden ill-gotten loot.

Maybe this is life imitating art ?

- EightEyedSpy

Love it. Quite a character this guy must have been. RIP

- Will D

Sounds like a massive wind-up. The dying man wanted to send his relatives on a wild goose chase.

    - flores93 Will D

    He must have known his sibling very well. Make a claim and watch them from the never never how they are at each others throat. That is what free money does to people . It exponentially increases their greed. I bet he he is having a laugh right now or had a big laugh beforehand in anticipation.

- V So

money buys happiness? that is the filthy rich with ill-gained money like to think. hope it is the last cruel joke the dying pulled on his greedy family. i have one suggestion to the warring family members: destroy the real estate holdings to rubble to find the precious metal. these people are so pitiful. the best crime novels screenplays are inspired by these real life tragic stories.

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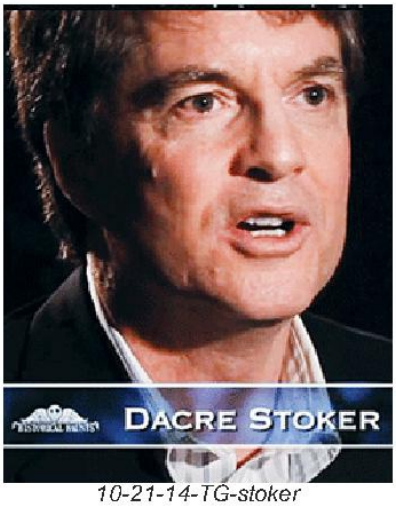
Descendant of Bram Stoker reflects on vampires, corpses and Mark Twain

portlanddailysun.me

Published Date Monday, 20 October 2014 20:10
Written by Timothy Gillis

"Dracula," the Bram Stoker gothic thriller that still scares readers today, got a few of its key elements from stories of vampires in New England, according to Dacre Stoker, Bram's great-grandnephew and co-author with Ian Holt of "Dracula: The Un-Dead."



10-21-14-TG-stoker

Stoker just came back from Guantanamo Bay where he entertained troops and students at the school there. "It was for morale and recreation," he said. "I was there for the literary and Halloween spirit."

Stoker was in Portland Monday night to kick off the screening of "Vampires of New England," a documentary by Historical Haunts. He talked about "Dracula" and its connections to New England.

"When Bram wrote 'Dracula' his writing experience was more than novels — he wrote a lot of newspaper articles and short stories. He also wrote 'Dracula' in the epistolary style. I'm convinced Bram's personal take on things was to make it realistic," he said.

One of his main elements of realism was based on news stories of vampire fears in New England at the turn of the century. People were digging up dead bodies to make sure the occupants were dead. When they showed some signs of life (hair or nail growth), people would cut out the heart to bury separately.

"When he went to America (1896), he picked up a copy of the New York World that showed genuine concern of a vampire scare," Stoker said. "There was alarm with allowing graves to be exhumed. It bore a striking similarity in Eastern Europe that the plague was causing similar things to happen, coughing up blood, the feeling of someone sitting on their chest, hallucinations. People knew later on it was consumption. When he saw that article, it was an 'Aha' moment for Bram, who was enamored of America."

Another article picked up what Charles Darwin was working on, Stoker explained. "He mentioned vampire bats in South America sucking the blood out of horses and dead bodies. He inserted the article in 'Dracula' almost word for word."

The descendant of the Irish writer also drew a connection between Mark Twain and his great-granduncle. "When Twain was living in Chelsea, London, the two of them shared this fascination with mysticism, science and technology," Stoker said. "Twain was trying to help invent this massive typewriter (the Paige Compositor) and corresponded with Bram about

investing in it."

The younger Stoker has spent a lot of time researching his famous ancestor and his contemporaries. In Twain's "Pudd'nhead Wilson," he finds a line ("Faith is believing in things you know to be untrue") that shows up in "Dracula."

"Twain was a great observer of everything around him," Stoker said. "I believe Bram — from the lost journals I found — was a great observer as well, and was willing to do something about what he observed in terms of social and political issues. When I studied them both, it made sense to me them sitting around discussing things, the intersection of faith, religion, and science."

Stoker found these lost journals when he was doing the research for "Dracula: The Un-Dead." The handwriting was terrible, he said, so he took pictures of each page and got some help from Elizabeth Miller, a Canadian academic.

"She helped me decipher them. It took about eight months," Stoker said of the journals Bram kept while a younger man, working in Dublin.

"They offer rare insights into him," Stoker said. "There was very little source material in the first hand — 'Dracula' notes, and one article with the only interview with him."

In terms of the exhumations that vampire-fearing New Englanders performed in the late 1800s, Stoker says it's actually understandable.

"People want answers. It's our human nature to find the answers. If we can't get them readily, we look to science, or superstition, the town elder, or priests."

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Diners Kicked Out of Shuttering Marie Callender's Mid-Meal

Written by Lauri Apple
Lauri Apple
Filed to: jerks

6/14/11 4:09am

Over the weekend, bankruptcy-declaring restaurant chain Marie Callender's sent some of its elite squadrons of corporado commandos to at least one of its Seattle area locations to kick out everyone inside—including longtime employees and customers who hadn't finished eating yet. Hard times demand even harder hearts!

Some diners had barely dug into their savory Heartland Chicken Pot Pies and perfecto chicken piccatas (we imagine) before The Suits came in and started telling them to leave the premises immediately:

> Manager Mapp Chhim says he was told to get everyone out and lock the door. The restaurant was shutting down immediately, "I thought it was a big joke. Because I was like, I still had people in the restaurant. They're like, they need to leave."

Yeah that's right. *Fuck you*, hungry families. *Fuck you*, birthday party of 25, who had to stop their reveling and am-scray; here's a birthday you'll never forget.

Fuck you, famous pies.

In addition to the customers, people who stopped by to pick up food orders were also screwed; when they arrived at the restaurant, nobody home. But the most-screwed of all, of course, were the employees, who now have no jobs:

> Chhim said about 50 people worked at the Northgate location, in addition to about 50 employees in Federal Way and several dozen more in Spokane. Together, the restaurant's closing leaves more than 100 people without a job in Washington state.
>
> "Some of them have two kids and somehow they have to find alternative income

to keep living. It's a big shock," he added. "I love working here. I love the people I work with."

A company spokeswoman calls the chain's method of shuttering its restaurants "a well thought-out but a very difficult decision." Oh that's weird, because actually it does not seem very well thought-out at all. Now, I am no seasoned restaurant-closure technician, but it seems quite feasible that Marie Callender's could have both given people 30 minutes or so to finish their meals and then shut down.

Today Perkins & Marie Callender's Inc., the restaurant chain's parent company, announced its Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection filing. The plan is to close 65 stores and cut 2500 jobs. Reports say that other Marie's locations nationwide are also getting the shock-and-awe treatment, so if you're planning to dine there then pack some Tupperware.

[KEZI, KOMO]

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Dirty Camp 30: Canadian POW Camp Battles Neglect & Decay

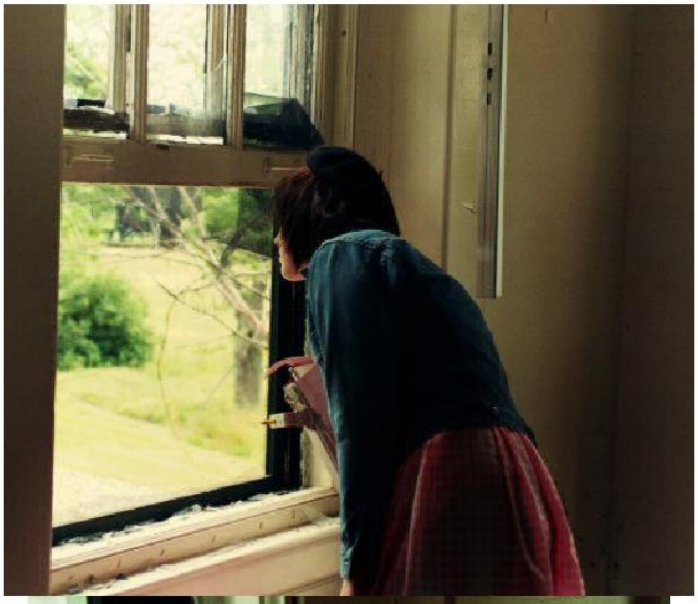
Article by **Steve**,

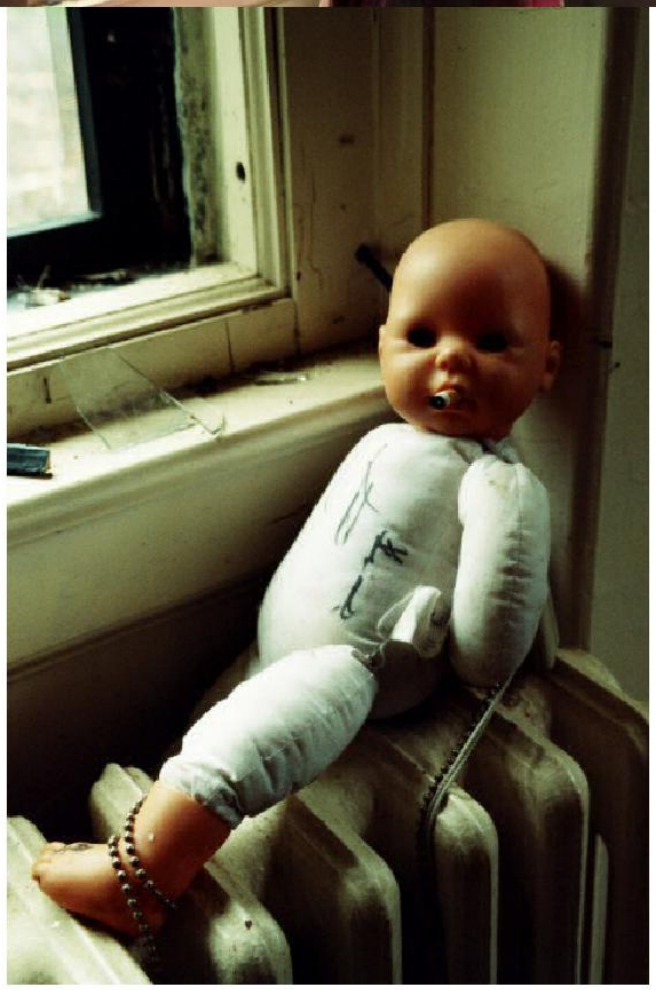
filed under **Abandoned Places** in the **Architecture** category.

http://weburbanist.com/2014/11/16/dirty-camp-30-canadian-pow-camp-battles-neglect-decay/

Camp 30, located east of Toronto, was one of Canada's main World War II POW camps and although named a National Historic Site, continues to be neglected

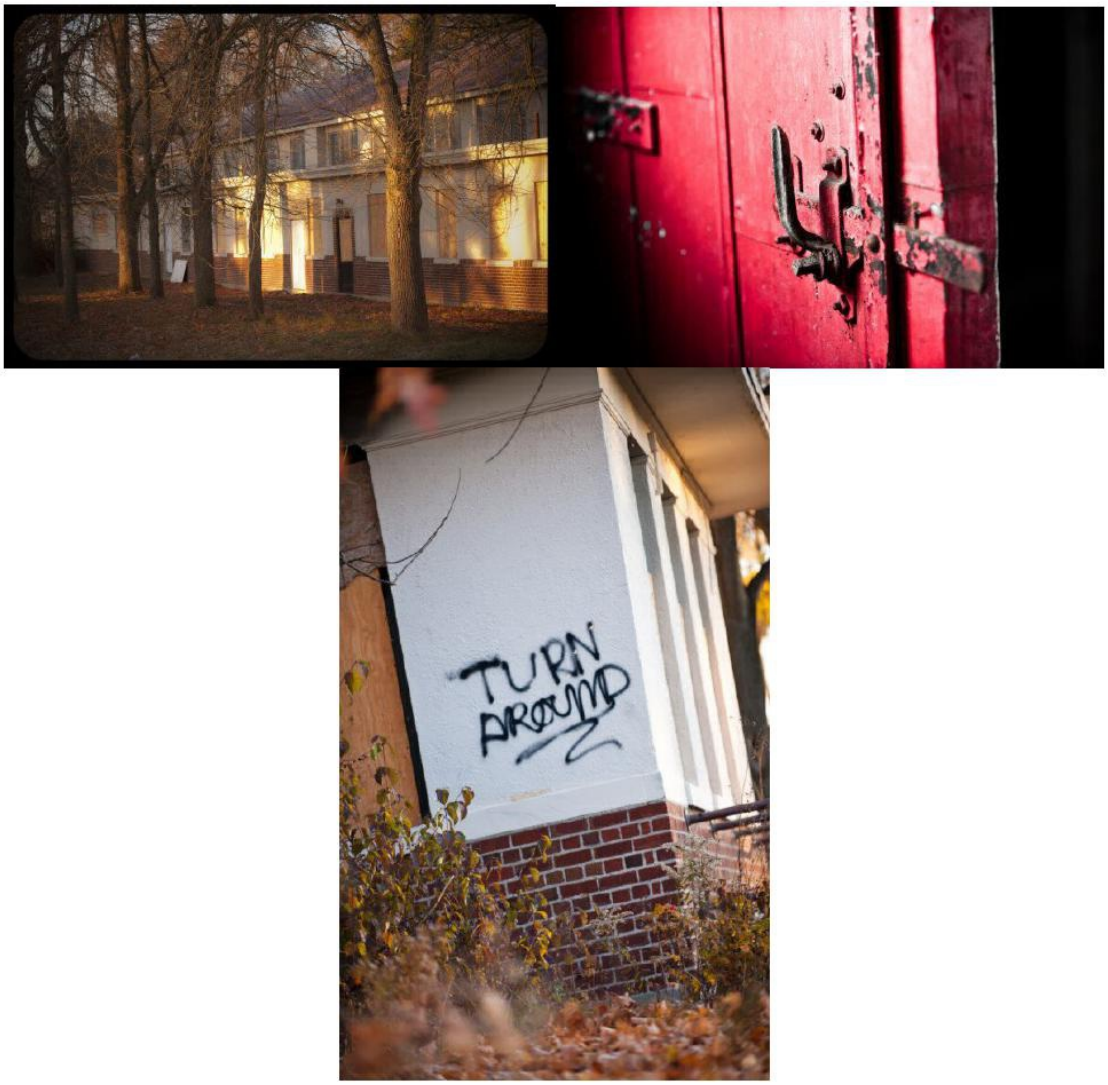
By 2013, Heritage Canada added Camp 30 to its annual listing of "The Top 10 Endangered Places". This led to the site's being named a National Historic Site, which helped discourage attempts at wholesale demolition and redevelopment. "*All we want to see is reuse of the buildings… some people want a big, beautiful museum, we understand the finances aren't there. We just want to see adaptive reuse"* pleaded Tracey Ali, president of ACO Clarington and one of those involved in the effort to resolve the issues presented by Camp 30's increasingly sorry state. *(credit Suzanne Schroeter with the above images)*





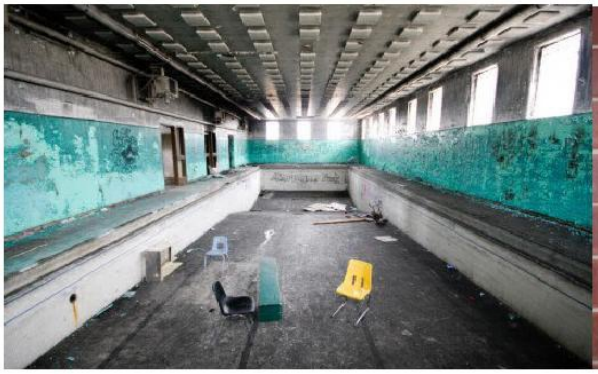
As of September 9th, 2013, a committee had been created to examine possible ways in which Camp 30's remaining buildings could be saved and preserved. All that's been decided, unfortunately, is the erection of a heritage plaque at the site reflecting its landmark designation. Yet Toronto Sun columnist Mike Stroebel saw no such plaque on his visit to the former Camp 30 on November 9th, 2014. What Stroebel (accompanied by author and historian Lynn Philip Hodgson and Marlene Hodgson) did find was "*…a site fit for zombies. Rarely has our history been so insulted by arsonists, vandals, graffiti scribblers and official inaction… No wonder there's no plaque. They're too embarrassed." (credit Brian .UE with the above images)*

The community of Bowmanville, Ontario, is home to just over 40,000 people, many of whom work in Toronto and commute daily via Highway 401. Only a tenth as many made Bowmanville their home in 1941, however, when the Canadian government ordered the Bowmanville Boys Training School (a "*school for unadjusted boys who were not inherently delinquent*") to vacate the site. By the end of the year, the former school and its environs had been converted into Camp 30 and the first German prisoners of war arrived. *(creditAlexLuyckx with the above images)*



Many of these prisoners were considered "high profile" – the reasoning being, the farther they were from Nazi Germany, the less chance of them returning there after a successful escape. Among the more notable Camp 30 prisoners were U-boat commanders Wolfgang Heyda and Otto Kretschmer, the latter credited with sinking 47 ships (totaling 274,333 tons) between the start of the war and his capture in March of 1941. *(credit Courtney McIntosh with the above images)*

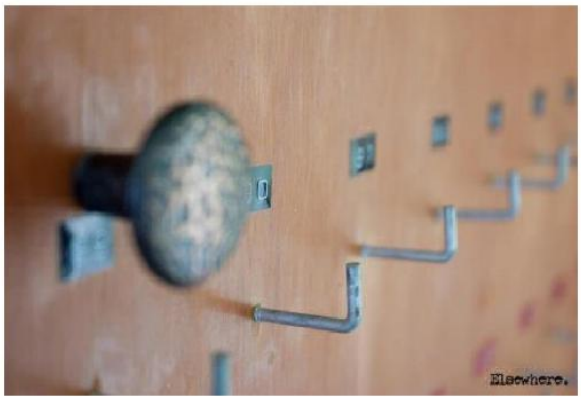
In stark contrast to the treatment doled out to Allied POWs in German prison camps, those prisoners sent to Camp 30 enjoyed a wealth of freedoms and amenities. As Camp 30 was a former boy's school, prisoners were allowed to use the indoor pool as well as the soccer and football fields. If that wasn't enough, authorities approved requests to build a tennis court and a mini zoo! *(credit ckocur with the above images)*



These perks and much more (read about Camp 30 in detail at theunofficial Camp 30 website) didn't stop the prisoners from carrying out their duty to escape, and at least a half dozen attempts – some quite elaborate and well-planned – were foiled by guards. *(credit Rick Harriswith the above images)*

The most notorious escape attempt (Operation Kiebitz) was hatched at Kriegsmarine headquarters in Berlin with the aim of rescuing the four top U-boat commanders held at Camp 30. In the event, only one POW managed to make it over the wire before being caught 870 miles to the east; while waiting on the shore of the St. Lawrence River for a U-boat to pick him up.

The most significant event to occur at Camp 30 was the so-calledBattle of Bowmanville, a widespread prisoner revolt which took place over several days in October of 1942. The revolt was sparked by the Allied tit-for-tat response to Hitler's infamous Commando Order which specified POWs who had participated in commando-style raids should be shackled. Between 1,500 and 4,000 German prisoners who refused an order that 100 of them be shackled commenced to riot and barricade themselves in Camp 30's mess hall. In breaking up the protest, one prisoner was wounded by gunfire, another was non-fatally bayoneted, and one Canadian soldier suffered a skull fracture after being struck by a thrown jar of jam. *(credit APERTURESHOTS with the above images)*



After the war ended in May of 1945, the several hundred prisoners held at Camp 30 were shipped back across the Atlantic to their homeland in Germany. Otto Kretschmer, for example, was none the worse for wear having been imprisoned at Camp 30 for almost four years: upon his repatriation, he joined the German Federal Navy reaching the rank of flotilla admiral (commodore) before retiring in 1970. Many former prisoners returned to Camp 30 over the years to attend reunions. *(credit zOth with the above images)*

Camp 30 itself hasn't done nearly as well – anything but, actually. Once empty of POWs, the camp returned to being a boys training school until 1979. The property was then utilized for a number of academic-related ventures including a school for overseas Malaysian students, St. Stephen's Catholic School, and finally a private Islamic university before being abandoned entirely in 2008. *(credit Suzanne Schroeter with the above images)*

Unguarded and unoccupied, the former Camp 30 quickly began to suffer from vandalism that saw all of its buildings' windows smashed. Subsequent ease of access to both vandals and the elements resulted in extensive damage, a proliferation of graffiti, and a number of fires set by arsonists. It wasn't long before citizens and authorities in Bowmanville, now a thriving bedroom community for Oshawa and the Greater Toronto Area, to petition the site be preserved in some way, shape or form.

District meets as group wants to pass out Satanic material at...

Posted: 4:24 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 13, 2014 wftv.com

Friday, Nov. 14, 2014 | 10:28 p.m.

Satanic Temple's satanic children's book photo

Religious groups have been allowed to hand Bibles out at Orange County Public Schools for several years, but district leaders are now looking at a policy that could ban the distribution of all religious materials.

The issue is now being driven by The Satanic Temple, which wants to pass out religious material like "The Satanic Children's Big Book of Activities."

"It seems that it would never occur to them that another religious group would want to come and put out their materials," said Lucien Greaves, a spokesman for The Satanic Temple.

Greaves told Channel 9 he doesn't actually worship Satan and that his group is atheistic. He said they feel the group, however, should have the right to leave materials anywhere Bibles are distributed.

If the district decided to ban all religious materials, Greaves said he'd consider that a win for his group.

Mathew Staver of the Liberty Counsel, which represents the group who distributed Bibles, believes if the district bows to that pressure, its setting itself up for a lawsuit.

"Certainly the Liberty Counsel will be bringing that lawsuit on behalf of our clients," he said. "This is unconstitutional."

Another group called Freedom From Religion Foundation has also been involved in the fight.

All three groups are expected to attend the district's meeting Thursday evening.

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Dog playing with matches starts house fire in Yukon

2014/12/09 cbc.ca

CBC News Posted: Dec 09, 2014 10:50 AM CT Last Updated: Dec 09, 2014 12:57 PM CT

Yukon's fire marshal is warning people to be careful after a dog playing with matches started a fire. 'Obviously it's easy enough for a dog to plan an escape when they set fire to their own dog bed,' says Dennis Berry. (submitted by Yukon Fire Marshal's Office)

The Yukon Fire Marshal's Office says a house fire in Mount Lorne last month was started by a dog chewing on a box of "strike anywhere" type matches.

Dennis Berry says no people — or dogs — were injured in the Nov. 25 fire, but there was extensive smoke damage to the home.

"Obviously it's easy enough for a dog to plan an escape when they set fire to their own dog bed," Berry says.

But Berry recommends human beings log on to the Fire Marshal's Facebook page to find tips on how to be safe in their own homes.

"The warning from this is that, certainly as we enter the holiday season, but any time of the year, that it's very easy start a fire and something as easy as a dog chewing on a pack of matches could easily start a fire."

Yukon fire marshal Dennis Berry. (CBC)

Berry says the fire was out by the time firefighters arrived on the scene.

He's reminding people to make sure smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are working and to have a home escape plan in the event of a fire.

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Dolphin 56's playful antics have Jersey boaters flipping

By Kelly Heyboer | The Star-Ledger | Follow on Twitter on June 21, 2009 at 11:21 AM, updated July 02, 2009 at 2:03 PM

nj.com

He's known the world over simply as "Dolphin 56".

He's a wild bottlenose dolphin with a passion for freshly caught fish and a reputation for cheekily sticking his crooked snout into fishermen's boats and playing with anyone who will pet his slick skin. His fans say meeting him in the middle of the ocean is a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

He has blogs, websites and a Facebook page devoted to his travels. And lately, he's been hanging out on the Jersey Shore.

Over the last 30 years, Dolphin 56 sightings have been recorded from Florida to Long Island. The bottlenose, whose dorsal fin was branded with a 56 for a research study in the 1970s, has spent his life swimming up and down the East Coast chasing down any boater or kayaker who might toss him a fish.

Dolphin 56 approaches the boat of Rod Houck, of Yardville, last summer off Island Beach State Park.

Fisherman Rod Houck ran into Dolphin 56 last summer when he saw something racing toward his boat off Island Beach State Park. Like a performer in a SeaWorld show, a dolphin with a "56" branded on its fin emerged from the waves and began squeaking and begging for fish.

"He swam out of the water at a 45-degree angle," said Houck, of Yardville. "He literally came up to the side of the boat -- like Flipper."

Once they got home, a friend of Houck's typed "Dolphin 56" into Google and learned they weren't alone. They were just another of countless boaters who have encountered one of the ocean's friendliest -- and perhaps most famous -- wild dolphins.

The Marine Mammal Strandling Center in Brigantine has documented more than 80 Dolphin 56 sightings in New Jersey in the last decade, including one earlier this month when the bottlenose was spotted begging boaters for fish in the bay in Avalon, Cape May County.

Rod Houck Sr. has a close encounter with Dolphin 56 on his son's boat last summer off Island Beach State Park.

Dolphin researcher Daniel Odell isn't surprised Dolphin 56 is up to his old tricks again. Odell first encountered the bottlenose in 1979 when he was among a group of dolphins captured near a causeway in the Indian River Lagood in Central Florida.

The dolphins were branded with numbers, released back into the wild and tracked for a government study that followed the movements of more than 100 dolphins for several years.

Dolphin 56, then an estimated 12 years old, was unusually outgoing, said Odell, a senior research scientist at Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute in Orlando.

"He turned out to be a very friendly dolphin," Odell said. "Everybody knew that animal."

Dolphin 56 eventually learned that approaching boats or people would lead to getting fish, Odell said. Over the years, the grew bolder and began to stick his snout into boats and allow people to pet him.

Though the research study ended int eh 1980s, Odell continued to get regular reports for decades about Dolphin 56's exploits up and down the East Coast. It is unclear why the dolphin chose to settle off the Jersey Shore instead of returning to warmer waters.

"For the past several years, he's been in New Jersey," Odell said. "Where he goes in the winter, no one knows."

Several people have reported seeing Dolphin 56 in the chilly New Jersey waters as late as Thanksgiving some years. Ken Hager, of Tinton Falls, spotted him on Nov. 4, 2007, while fishing from his boat near Barnegat Lighthouse. Dolphin 56 seemed to have no fear.

"He actually almost stood on his tail looking into the boat," Hager said. "My son said he thought was someone's pet ... He came right up to the boat and was looking in at the bait."

Though he is an estimated 42 years old, Dolphin 56 shows no signs of slowing down, said Bob Schoelkopf, co-director of the Marine Mammal Stranding Center. Most dolphins in the wild die by age 30.

Dolphin 56 shows signs he was hit by a boat at one time in his life, said Schoelkopf, who has a collection of photos of the dolphin taken by boaters.

"Half his teeth are missing. He had a fractured jaw ... But he's fat. That's good," said Schoelkopf, a former dolphin trainer. "He's reached the golden age of dolphins now."

Schoelkopf is more concerned that New Jerseyans are getting too close to Dolphin 56.

"People have tried to swim with him, which is not a good idea," Schoelkopf said. "Don't feed him. Don't interact with him."

Feeding wild dolphins is illegal and can lead to fines up to $20,000 and one year in jail, according to the National Marine Fisheries Service, the federal agency that oversees the nation's marine habitats.

Tossing dolphins fish can teach them to get too close to people and lead to boat collisions. Giving bottlenoses the wrong type of food could also make them sick, researchers said.

"In the end, it's just not good for the animal," said Peter Fischel, a spokesman for the National Marine Fisheries Service.

Houck, the Yardville boater who encountered Dolphin 56 last year, is hooked. He keeps an eye out for the bottlenose every time he is out in his boat.

Houck said he is determined to get the first video of Dolphin 56 and post it on his website, NJ-SaltwaterFisherman.com, where fellow fishermen have been swapping stories about the dolphin.

"Now I don't travel on the boat without a video camera," Houck said. "It's for him. It's ready to go."

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Dolphin found dumped in alleyway a mile from the sea 'died from too much SEX'

mirror.co.uk

- Nov 08, 2014 10:20
- By Ben Cusack

The covered body of a dead porpoise which was discovered in Worthing - one mile from the sea.

The mystery of a porpoise found dumped in a village alleyway a mile from the sea has been solved after experts revealed it probably died as a result of too much sex.

The 4ft mammal was found in a housing estate alleyway in Tarring, West Sussex. Its body was still warm and it was lying in a pool of its own blood.

Experts say the elderly male porpoise is likely to have died from starvation and hypothermia as a result of burning too much energy mating.

The creature is thought to have washed up on a beach from where it was carried by revellers a mile inland and left in the alleyway in a yellow bag.

SWNS

Grim: The covered body of a dead porpoise was discovered in an alleyway

Stunned locals rang the RSPCA who contacted the Cetacean Strandings Investigation Programme (CSIP) team.

Rob Deaville, from CSIP, carried out an examination of the porpoise corpse on after it was discovered on Saturday night.

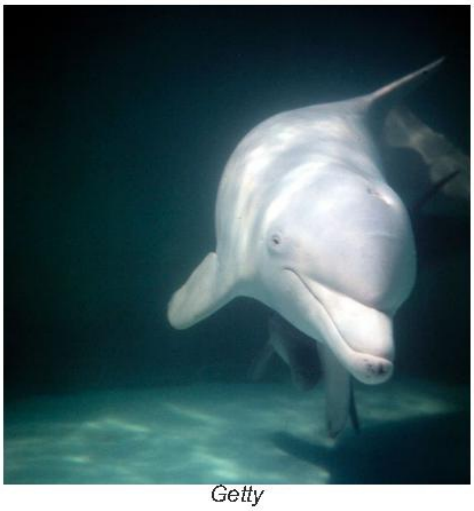
He said: "The male porpoise was in a pretty poor way. Its body was fairly fresh, which would indicate it had died up to a couple of days before it was found.

"The cause of death seems to be starvation and hypothermia.

"This appears to be an elderly porpoise, who would have had to expend most of his energy reserves to mate - leaving him deathly hungry and cold.

"Harbour porpoises live on a knife edge, and if they don't get enough food, their fat reserves deplete, meaning they don't have enough energy to catch food.

"Their health spirals downward, and they die as a result of both starvation and hypothermia."



Getty

Ocean dweller: Porpoises are part of the dolphin family and live in the sea

The Mirror reported earlier this week how locals were left puzzled by the discovery of the 12 stone mammal .

Rob added: "It is impossible to tell where it washed up on the beach, because it was moved.

"I strongly suspect it alcohol was involved with whoever decided to carry it from the beach and take it a mile inland to the alley.

"Sadly, it's not the first time this has happened, and it won't be the last.

"We got a call once about a dolphin that was stuffed inside a phone box in Kent."

Googlemaps

Shock: Locals in Tarring, West Sussex, were left baffled when the porpoise was found in the village

Defra-funded CSIP monitor as many of the 600 marine mammal strandings that happen on British shores annually, about half of which are porpoises.

The male porpoise is believed to have been nearing the end of its natural, 20-year lifespan, but finding a definitive age can only be carried out by cutting through a tooth and counting the rings like on trees.

In 2009, another porpoise was found covered in bin bags in the middle of a forest in Goring-By-Sea, West Sussex.

Porpoises live around 20 years in English waters, and up to the age of about 25 in less-polluted Scottish waters.

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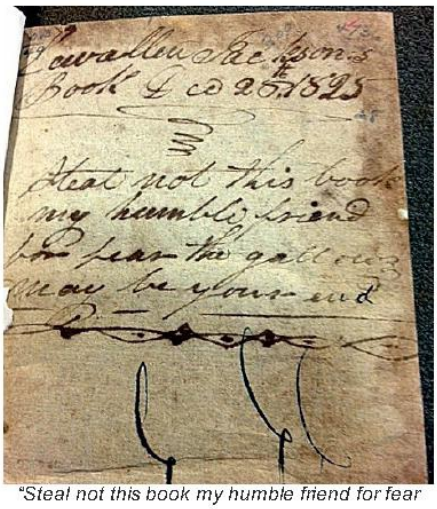
This post was written by Julia Blakely, Special Collections cataloger. It first appeared on the Smithsonian Collections blog here.

Discovering an interesting mark of a former owner in a volume is one of the many great things about working with rare books. A signature of a famous person, a fun drawing, a gift presentation, marginal annotations revealing a reader's thoughts, a memento laid-in, are not uncommon to come upon. Such additions after a work has been printed can provide the researcher with a connection to the past that provides important information. Or, can give a specific warning, if not a curse:



"Steal not this book my humble friend for fear the gallows may be your end."

Why the owner, Lewallen Jackson, held this book so dear that he recorded such a threat on December 26, 1825, is one of those mysteries. Perhaps it was his standard—and effective—marking. And, of course, the early nineteenth century was still a period when books were expensive and not readily available, particularly for the frontier farmer that Jackson appears to have been (from a quick look at online Census records).

This inscription happens to be located in an important work. Much appreciated in its time, this first edition of Notes, on the Settlement and Indian Wars, of the Western Parts of Virginia & Pennsylvania by Joseph Doddridge (Wellsburgh, Va.: Printed at the Office of the Gazette, for the Author, 1824) was followed by two later versions (in 1876 and 1912) and many later reprints. None other than Theodore Roosevelt proclaimed it to be "the most valuable book we have on old-time frontier ways and customs."* Although never much to look at, not being an example of fine printing and lacking illustrations, it is cherished today. Written by a pioneer minister, physician and historian, it is regarded as being accurate and knowledgeable about the United States' early westward expansion. The volume also contains some of the ever-popular Indian captivity narratives.

This copy can provide the researcher with some information about early American book ownership and reading habits. "Steal not this book" at least brings a chuckle to the modern reader!

Julia Blakely
Special Collections Cataloger
Smithsonian Libraries

*quoted in J. Merton England, "Some Early Historians of Western Virginia," West Virginia History, January 1953.

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Dozens of bats invade Utah courthouse

standard.net

ST. GEORGE — Order is being restored to the courthouse in St. George with the removal of dozens of bats from the building.

The Brazilian free-tailed bats were discovered Thursday when employees arrived for work at the 5th Judicial District Courthouse.

Eric Palmer of Southwest Exterminators told The Spectrum of St. George that over 50 bats were removed Thursday and Friday from the attic and other areas of the building.

Court officials say while the bats caused minimal disruptions in court operations, some proceedings had to be moved from one courtroom to another.

Officials say suspected entry points opened up during a recent renovation were sealed to prevent bats from entering the building.

Because Brazilian free-tailed bats are a species of special concern in Utah, they were released back into the wild.

Standard-Examiner 2014

Will Allan Dromgoole, as noted earlier, had a very special vocabulary for the Melungeon people. Good or bad, she is still considered an authority on them. Here are a number of infamous quotes from her book *The Malungeons*:

> *"The most that can be said of one of them is, 'He is a Malungeon,' a synonym for all that is doubtful and mysterious — and unclean."*
>
> *"But to the people of the foot hills and the nearer valleys they [Melungeons] became a living terror; sweeping down upon them, stealing their cattle, their provisions, their very clothing, and household furniture."*
>
> *"At the breaking out of the war [Civil War], some few enlisted in the army, but the greater number remained with their stills, to pillage and plunder among the helpless women and children."*
>
> *"'A Malungeon,' said he, 'isn't a nigger, and he isn't an Indian, and he isn't a white man. God only knows what he is. I should call him a Democrat, only he always votes the Republican ticket.'"*
>
> *"The Malungeons are filthy, their home is filthy. They are rogues, natural, 'born rogues,' close, suspicious, inhospitable, untruthful, cowardly, and, to use their own word 'sneaky.'"*

However, if you have the stomach to search beyond the bigoted hyperbole, there are some valid insights into the community.

> *"The laugh of the Malungeon woman is the most exquisitely musical jingle, a perfect ripple of sweet sound."*
>
> *"On the Ridge proper, one finds only the pure Malungeons; it is in the unsavory limits of Black Water Swamp and on Big Sycamore Creek, lying at the foot of the Ridge between it and Powell's Mountain, that the mixed races dwell."*
>
> *"They resort to a very peculiar method of distinguishing themselves. Jack Collins' wife for instance will be Mary Jack. His son will be Ben Jack. His daughters' names will be similar; Nancy Jack or Jane Jack, as the case may be, but always having the father's Christian name attached."*
>
> *"The Malungeons are very careful for their dead. They build a kind of floorless house above each separate grave, many of the homes of the dead being far better than the dwellings of the living. The graveyard presents the appearance of a diminutive town, or settlement, and is kept with great nicety and care. They mourn their dead for years, and every friend and acquaintance is expected to join in the funeral arrangements. They follow the body to the grave, sometimes for miles, afoot, in single file. Their burial ceremonies are exceedingly interesting and*

peculiar."

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East Germany's trade in human beings

5 November 2014 bbc.com

Daniela Walther with her parents after the move to West Germany in 1969

People who tried to escape from East Germany during the Cold War could be shot, jailed and tortured. But the government was so short of money that some ended up being secretly sold - to West Germany, the country most of them had been trying to reach in the first place.

"I found myself at a police station on my own. The counter seemed so high because I was only a little girl and I remember the policeman asking: 'Why are you not crying?' I think about his words now and ask myself: 'Yeah, why wasn't I crying?' I suppose I was in shock."

Daniela Walther recalls the night she was caught trying to flee East Berlin. It was 13 August 1961. She was five years old.

Two days earlier her father, Karl-Heinz Prietz who was a reporter at a teaching magazine, had come home with a tip-off that the authorities in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) were going to close the border between communist East Berlin and capitalist West Berlin.

"He knew they were going to build a wall," says Walther, referring to the Berlin Wall, which fell 25 years ago, on 9 November 1989.

Knowing it would be all but impossible to move to West Berlin after the barrier was erected, Walther's father convinced her mother to flee right away.

"She was reluctant to give up her teaching job - teaching was her raison d'etre - but she agreed," says Walther.

Construction of the Berlin Wall started in August 1961 - at first it was mostly made of wire

Soldiers started to build the Berlin Wall in August 1961

"My father told us where to go, where we would try to cross, and we waited for him in this allotment. We stayed there on the night of 11 August, sleeping in somebody's shed. I remember my mother agonising and telling me to be quiet. I felt afraid."

The following evening her father came and led them to what he thought was a weak spot in the border, which was already quite heavily patrolled. "He went ahead and called for my mother to follow, but she froze - she didn't have the courage. I remember standing next to her, listening to my dad calling."

And then the guards appeared. "They came out of the darkness and arrested my father. They took him away - I didn't see him for another eight years," she says.

Walther and her mother were also arrested and taken to a police station. Her mother was sentenced to nine months in prison for being an accomplice to the escape attempt and Walther was sent to live with her grandparents in the village of Stockhausen.

"Being the daughter of someone who tried to cross the border was worse than being the daughter of a murderer," she says.

"My grandparents said: 'If anyone asks, tell them you're the daughter of Lilo,' who was my aunt in West Germany."

Daniela Walther while she was living with her grandparents

Daniela Walther while she was living with her grandparents

Walther adjusted quickly to her new life. "I was actually very happy. My grandparents had lots of animals, including a dog, and because of collectivisation everything was open - there was no private land or fences - so I used to go off exploring."

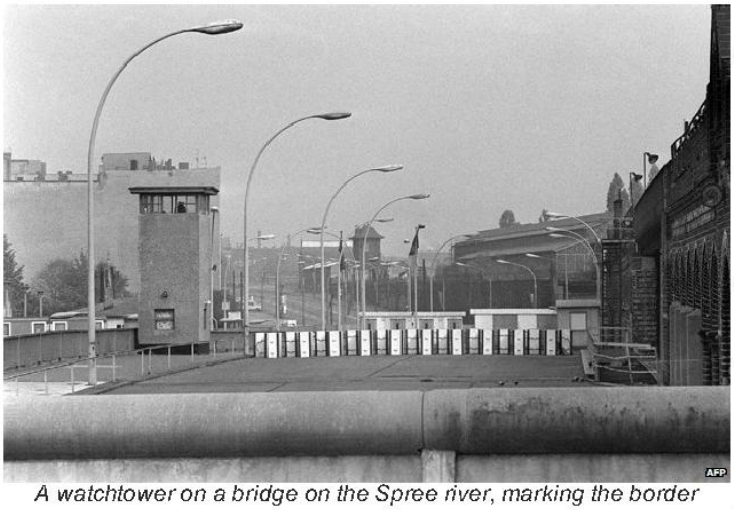
Walther even taught herself to ski. "I found my father's skis, which were far too big for me, and I learned to ski in the orchard - which was probably quite dangerous," she says.

When her mother was released from prison the pair moved to Potsdam, where their relationship became fraught. "My mother was really quite unstable," recalls Walther. She

distracted herself by enrolling in the army's horse acrobatics team, and performing in the breaks at equestrian events.

Meanwhile, East Germany's economy was in free fall. Many skilled workers and intellectuals had fled and the Soviet Union was stripping the country of its resources. By 1964 the fiscal situation had become so dire that the authorities developed a scheme to sell political prisoners to West Germany. They called it *haeftlingsfreikauf*.

line



A watchtower on a bridge on the Spree river, marking the border between East and West Berlin

The Berlin Wall

- Construction started on 13 August 1961 when barbed wired fences were put up overnight
- It cut off West Berlin from surrounding East Germany and East Berlin
- There were more than 300 watchtowers
- 136 people are known to have died trying to cross it - though victims' groups say the true figure was closer to 700
- On 9 November 1989 the border was opened and the wall torn down

line

"Between 1964 and 1989 some 33,755 political prisoners and 250,000 of their relatives were sold to West Germany, for a sum totalling 3.5bn Deutschmarks," says historian and author, Andreas Apelt.

"Both sides had an interest in the business - the GDR because it needed Western currency and the West because it wanted to save people from the inhumane prisons of the GDR."

Prisoners were also traded for commodities such as coffee, copper and oil.

However, neither side wanted the public to find out - the GDR because it didn't want to appear weak and West Germany because it didn't want to be seen supporting the communist regime.

So the operation remained clandestine - people were traded in darkened nooks of the underground railway, the U-Bahn, or sent across the border in buses with revolving license plates. The number plates would switch at the checkpoints, so as not to arouse suspicion on the other side.

In 1968, a price for Walther's father, Karl-Heinz Prietz, was negotiated. "He'd been in prison for eight years. He was tortured - he didn't explain the methods, but they destroyed his health. I don't think he saw daylight for years," she says.

Daniela Walther looking through an old photo album, 2014

While locked away, Prietz had spent hours writing down the bedtime stories he had once recounted to his daughter. "He invented stories about two bears called Bumsi and Plumsi, who had lots of adventures," she says. "In prison he continued to write these stories in old exercise books - there was a huge pile of them."

However, prisoners weren't allowed to leave East Germany with anything except their clothes, so he sent the books to his wife for safe keeping.

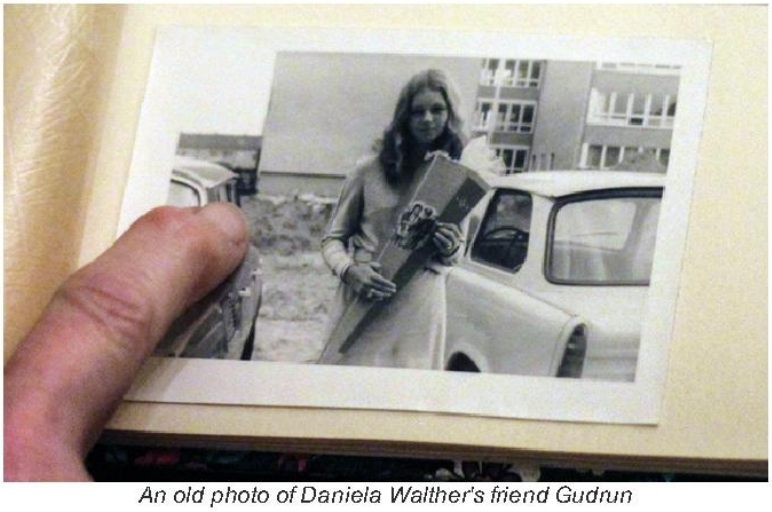
Once Prietz was settled in West Berlin, a deal was made for Walther and her mother to follow.

"I really didn't want to go - I wanted to stay in East Germany with my grandparents - but the deal was for wife and daughter," she says. "I think they paid 100,000 Deutschmarks for us."

When the time came to pack their bags, her mother said there was no space for her father's story books. "She didn't bring them with us. She said there wasn't enough room, even though we took all this other junk. I have never forgiven her," says Walther.

The two of them were taken across the border via Bahnhof Friedrichstrasse, a railway station on the frontier between East and West Berlin. It was 1969 and Daniela was 13 years old.

"My friend Gudrun came with us to say goodbye. I was very sad to leave her. She said she would come and visit when she was 60, because you were allowed to leave East Germany when you were 60."



An old photo of Daniela Walther's friend Gudrun

Daniela Walther still has old photos of her friend Gudrun

After bidding farewell to Gudrun, Walther and her mother were interrogated by the secret services of the UK, France and the US, which controlled West Berlin. "They asked all these questions and I remember thinking: 'Sorry my life is so boring,'" says Walther.

"My father was waiting for us on the other side. I didn't recognise him, which was very painful for him. He was crying." Having been so young when they were

separated, Walther felt more upset about losing her friend.

Life in West Berlin didn't work out for the reunited family. Walther's parents split up and she had difficulty adapting to the unfamiliar school system.

"When you're a child, school is the centre of your world and I hated it," she says. "I went from being top of the class in East Germany to being at the bottom. My language teacher told me I would never get to grips with English."

Daniela Walther with her parents after the move to West Germany - Christmas 1969

Determined to prove her teacher wrong, Walther persuaded her father to pay for her to attend a language school in the UK. "I was the apple of his eye - he would have done anything for me," she says. So in 1972 Walther arrived in the UK and before long went on to study languages at Goldsmiths College in London. In her second year she met her husband, Bill, with whom she had two children. Framed pictures of Berlin adorn the walls of their south London home.

Walther, now 59 and a teacher like her mother, is glad she left East Germany. "It was for the best - otherwise I wouldn't have come to the UK, met Bill or moved to London, which is a city I love," she says. "But if I had stayed, then I would have made a good life over there. People were well looked after and I agreed with the principles of the state - I still do - just not all the spying and oppression."

Although she disapproves of the idea of selling prisoners, she understands why it happened. "It was pretty mercenary of the East Germans, but they were being bled dry by the Russians," she says. "For West Germany it was a humanitarian effort."

Walther's father died in 1996, followed by her mother in 2010. After that night at the border their relationship never recovered. "She just couldn't decide," says Walther. "And that's what ruined them."

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November 20, 2014

Native Americans, like the settlers, had their own respective culture in every tribe. Just as the Irish and German settlers brought differing cultures, so did the various native tribes throughout the nation. Much of our folklore has evolved through the centuries and it's as difficult to retain the old knowledge as it is the old civility.

In the 1880s, several individuals sought the old legends of the Cherokee. The primary goal was simply to record and preserve what was considered "ancient" legends. Sources claim that even then, many of the old stories had vanished in lieu of modernized legends. These early legends originated with the Cherokee who inhabited eastern North Carolina.

The ancient Cherokee regarded the number "4" as having mystical significance. If they prayed to an animal, it had to be addressed from the four quarters of the compass.

If they prayed to the "old men," they addressed them in the same way. According to the folklore, prayers to the four men served a variety of purposes. The Blue Man inhabited the north. The White Man inhabited the South. The Red Man inhabited the east and the Black Man in lived in the west.

If a Cherokee wanted to kill a rival, he bought or bartered for the formula from the tribe's medicine man. If he had the required amount, the medicine man would do everything for him. If he didn't want to use the assistance of the medicine man, he could turn towards the west and ask the Black Man to kill the rival or enemy. If he just wanted failure or defeat for the other party, he would ask the Blue Man in the north.

Happiness and power were obtained by prayer to the White Man in the south or the Red Man in the east. To get rid of sickness or disease, medicine men prayed to the Red Man, the Blue Man, the White Man and finally the Black Man. It was believed the spirits then carried the illness away and hid it within a western lake.

When water was prayed to, they referred to it as the "Long Man." It received this name because it's "head" was in the mountains while its "feet" were in the oceans. Fire was called the "Ancient White" because it is so old, because ashes are white, and the hottest fire burns white. Red embers were occasionally called the "Ancient Red."

Thunder and lightening together was called the "Great Red Man." The sun was the "Measurer" because it measured time. Corn was often referred to as the "Old Woman," because it grew from the spilled blood of an old woman in ancient times.

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As early as the First Dynasty, **Mafdet** has been considered the goddess of judgment, justice, and execution. She is believed to be the first feline goddess, predating Bastet and Sekhmet. She is often depicted as a woman with the head of a cheetah. Sometimes she had the head of a cat, a leopard, a lynx or even a mongoose. She may also take the form of a panther in some depictions. She had braided hair that ended up into a scorpion's tails or joint bodies of scorpions she may have killed. Sometimes, she wears a headdress made of snakes. Her name may also be spelled Maftet or Mefdet, and means "she who runs", thus earning her the epithet "the runner" relating to her swift execution of justice.

Her symbols include the pole, the rope and the blade of execution, with Mafdet in feline form climbing up it.

As a feline goddess, she is a protector against venomous bites especially those of snakes and scorpions (probably due to the fact that cats are killers of snakes and scorpions). In fact, in the Old Kingdom, she is depicted as the protector of Ra whose weaknesses included snakebites and scorpion stings. She is usually invoked in rituals of those afflicted by the deadly venoms. Her sharp claws are likened to that of the harpoon of the pharaoh that protects him from his enemies in the Underworld. Because of this, Mafdet is the protector of the pharaoh, his chambers, his tomb and other sacred places.

As the goddess of execution, she is seen as a feline running up the side of the staff of the executioner. She is believed to rip out the hearts of wrongdoers and will personally deliver them to the pharaoh's feet in the same manner that a cat delivers her catch to her owners. Because of this, she gained the title "Avenger of the King". During the New Kingdom, she is seen to be ruling over the judgment hall of Duat. In this hall, Mafdet's sharp claws are used in the execution of rebels and enemies by decapitation.

Her other known titles include "Lady of the House of Life", "Slayer of Serpents", and the "Great Cat".

Information and text on the cult following of Mafdet have been scarce. In fact, the more recent goddess, Bastet, another feline deity in the form of a lioness who protects the king and the pharaoh, may have eclipsed Mafdet's popularity and assimilated her functions. However, Mafdet's reverence and existence is still evident especially to pharaohs. Her images can be found the pharaohs' personal items and in the beds where they were mummified.

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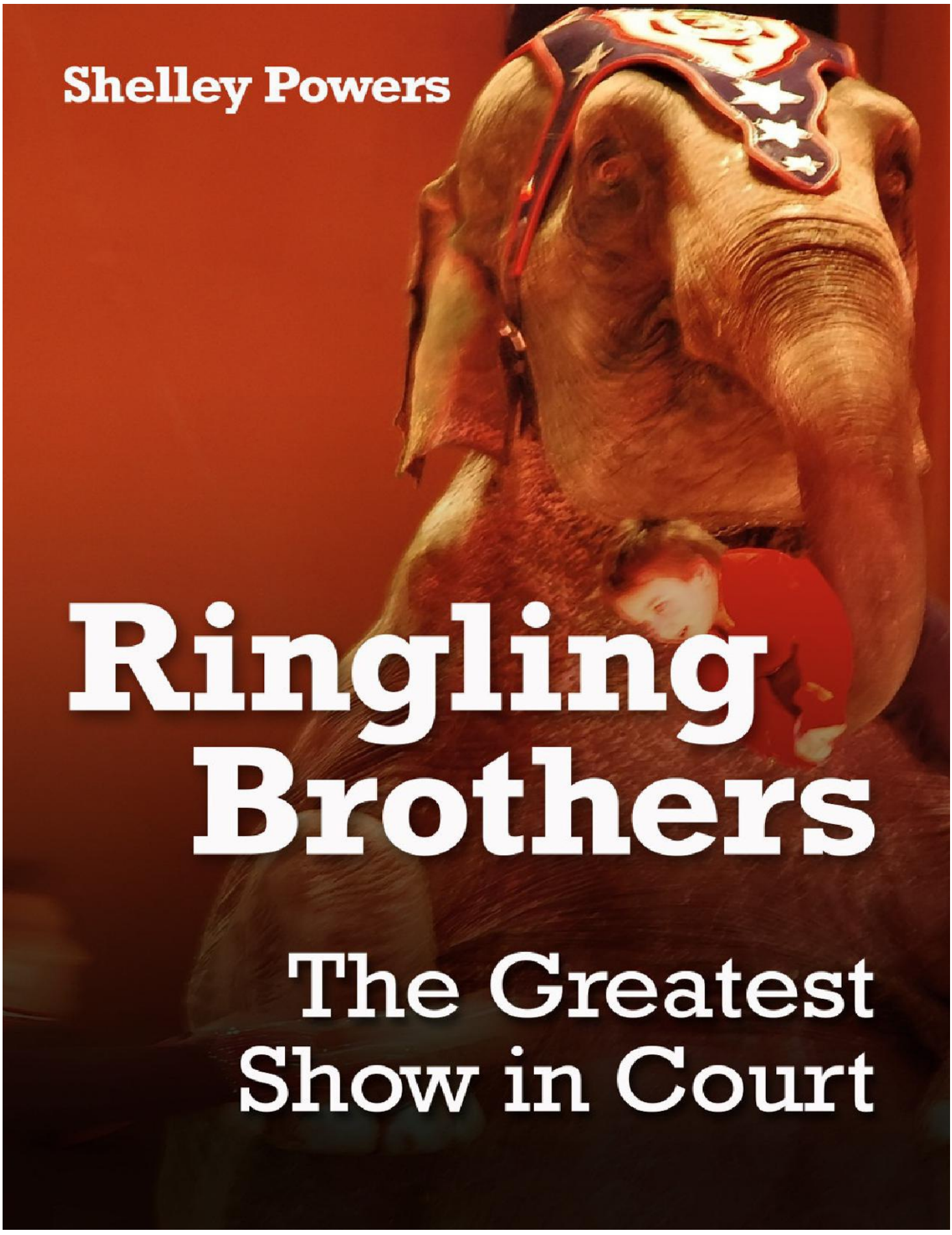
Shelley Powers
Ringling Brothers
The Greatest Show in Court

1899 John Myers with the Hagenback Menagerie, is having a bad week. One day, his hand was bit by a leopard. The next day, one of the elephants picked him up and hurled him against a wall, seriously injuring him. New York Times, December 16, 1899.

1899 Well known elephant trainer M. J. Meagher, also known as Patsy Forepaugh, was killed by an elephant, Sid, when Meagher poked the elephant with a stick. Sid hurled the trainer to the ground, and then fell on him, piercing Meagher with his tusks. New York Times, December 21, 1899.

Incidents from 1900-1950

Elephants were rarely put down when killing handlers in the 1800s because the animals were so costly. Handlers were usually easier to replace.

During the last twelve months at least a dozen elephant trainers have been killed—more than have been killed in ten years previous.

Los Angeles Herald, March 21, 1900

This state changed in the 1900s.

1900 Dick, a dancing elephant in the Forepaugh & Sells circus, was strangled to death when ropes were put around his neck and then pulled by two other elephants, in an attempt to get him to move. "It was thought that if he were partially strangled, he would give in." New York Times, April 23, 1900.

1900 Sport, an elephant in the Hagenback show, is killed because of injuries he received a few weeks prior during a train wreck. He backed against the train car door, it broke and he fell through. He was left partially paralyzed by the accident. To "euthanize" Sport, he was hanged by a chain wrapped around his neck that was lifted by a construction derrick. New York Times, June 8, 1900.

1901 Big Charley killed elephant keeper Henry Huffman in Peru, Indiana. Big Charley grabbed Huffman while the keeper was bathing the elephant in a nearby river. Big Charley then held Huffman under his foot in the water. After killing Huffman, Big Charley tore about a nearby field until someone loaded apples with strychnine and tossed them to he elephant. An hour later, Big Charley collapsed in agony and was shot. San Francisco Call, April 26, 1901.

1901 Lightning struck a circus tent, killing an elephant, and injuring other animals. New York Times, June 29, 1901.

1902 A Forepaugh & Sells elephant named Tops (Topsie) killed one of her handlers, Joseph Blunt, when instead of shaking her offered trunk in the morning as was customary, he shoved a beer glass into it. Tops then grabbed Blunt, knocked him to the ground, and crushed him to death. San Francisco Call, May 8, 1902.

The New York Times had a different take on Blunt's death. According to an article published May 29, 1902, Blunt (the New York Times used "Blount") was just a hanger-on, not an employee, who got drunk, snuck into the tent where Tops was secured and started to tease the elephant. Enraged, the elephant grabbed the man, and killed him.

1902 Though happening in France, a Ringling Brothers elephant broke its chains at a railway and tried to kill its keeper. "Two hundred men tugged at the rope which strangled the elephant." San Francisco Call, June 13, 1902.

1902 An elephant on exhibition at an Elks' carnival, escaped and broke into the home of a candy manufacturer. The elephant tossed the bed holding two children and their mother, badly bruising one child and severely injuring the mother. It was then subdued by its keeper. San Francisco Call, September 23, 1902.

1902 The elephant Gypsy (Empress), who killed at least five keepers in the 1800s, killed James "Jimmy the Bum" O'Rourke outside of Valdosta, Georgia. There are two different accounts of the events surrounding Gypsy's actions that day. One account in the New York Times had it she had been through a train wreck earlier in the day, and remained agitated on the relief train. Her keeper entered the car to quiet her, but was killed, instantly. Another account, detailed in a Lowndes County Historical Society newsletters, stated that Gypsy and her keeper had helped to tear down the tents after the final showing in Valdosta and were walking back to the train. Later, Gypsy was found wondering alone, and her keeper was found dead—crushed to death. During the killing, Gypsy's tusk was broken off at the base, the pain of which drove an already temperamental elephant, mad.

Regardless of the events leading up to the end, Gypsy rampaged throughout the night, hurting several circus people trying to re-capture her, and waking the towns people. Eventually, the town citizens cornered her in the fair grounds where the Chief of Police, Calvin Dampier, shot her with a high powered rifle. Lowndes County Historical Society and Museum, *http://valdostamuseum.com/exhibitions/online-exhibits-2/gypsy-the-elephant/*

Figure B-1. Gypsy and her killer

1902 A Barnum & Bailey elephant named Mandarin became unmanageable and the circus owners decided to have him killed. A thick cable was tied around his neck, attached to a winch, and tightened until Mandarin strangled to death. His body was then weighed down with chains, hauled out to the sea, and sunk. San Francisco Call, November 9, 1902.

1903 In one of the more famous elephant executions of all time, a Forepaugh elephant named Topsy is condemned to public electrocution by none other than Thomas Edison. Edison wanted to film the event to demonstrate how 'unsafe' alternate current was compared to his own direct current technology. Topsy was condemned because she had killed three men in three years. A copy of the film can be seen at the Wikipedia page about Topsy, at *http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Topsy_(elephant)*.

1903 Alies Kaldy was transporting two camels and an elephant to the Jabour circus, when he was crushed to death by the elephant. Los Angeles Herald, May 26, 1903.

1903 A major train wreck claims the lives of 23 circus performers, as well as one

elephant and two camels, from the Wallace Bros. circus. San Francisco Call, August 8, 1903.

1904 An elephant in a show in St. Paul, Minnesota in January, attacked his keeper, Conrad Castens, most likely injuring him fatally. Those caring for the elephant believe it was maddened because the cold had froze its ears and trunk. Los Angeles Herald, January 25, 1904.

1904 A Campbell Brothers circus train caught fire, burning to death three elephants, four camels, two bears, three water buffaloes, a cage of monkeys, and several horses. New York Times, May 3, 1904.

1907 A Forepaugh elephant, Mac, protected its younger elephant friend from a train fire, and was badly burned. "Shortly after the circus train left Poughkeepsie a great trumpeting was heard. The train was stopped, and it was found that the car containing Mac and his mate was filled with flames. When the door was opened it was seen that the hay used for bedding was on fire. Mac was standing over his mate, stamping on the burning hay and trying to thrash out the flames with his trunk." New York Times, August 1, 1907.

1907 A horse was so frightened by a parade of elephants, it dropped dead in the street. New York Times, August 23, 1907.

1908 A group of elephants from the Sells-Floto circus are startled by an explosion at a nearby Standard Oil refinery. They ran through the community of Riverside, killing an Ella Gibbs, injuring others, and smashing an inn and several other buildings. Imperial Valley Press, 1908.

1909 Tom (also known as Tom-Tom), an elephant in the winter quarters of an unidentified circus, killed his keeper, Charles Bellew. He then ran through the circus park, knocking over wagons and uprooting trees until shot to death. San Francisco Call, April 9, 1901.

1910 Twenty elephants in the Ringling Brothers circus stampeded during a ringside parade when one of the elephants took off after the circus horses and riders. The crowd of 7000 at the circus panicked, and several people were hurt when they tried to rush for safety.

This is the first instance where we see circuses actively work to downplay such events.

"I am usually keen for newspaper space", said Press Agent Guy Steeley, "but in this case I can't see anything doing. Really it was only a trifling incident. The girl that thought she had hurt her chest merely had lost her breath. The elephant Billy, did not run amuck, but his hood slipped over his eyes so that he could not see where he was going. It was all over in a minute or two.

"Yes, now that you mention it, some of the light fence was torn away where Billy bumped into it, but I'm sure he didn't mean to. He's too well educated".

The Chicago Tribune, April 10, 1910

1910 Rajah knocks down his keeper, Tony Nustano, and then tramples him. The newspaper article notes that it's doubtful Nustano will survive. Los Angeles Herald, May 12, 1910.

1910 Gypsy Queen kills her keeper, Robert Schiel, October 20. On November 26, she's fed potassium Cyanide, and killed. Los Angeles Herald, November 27, 1910.

1912 An elephant, supposedly maddened by lack of water, broke out of its chains at a wild west show near Chicago and ran wild through the suburbs where the show was taking place. It treed police sent to contain it, smashed fences, and overturned a couple of small buildings. It was eventually recaptured by the circus people. August 21, 1912.

(Hopefully they finally gave it some water.)

1916 "Murderous Mary", an elephant in the Sparks' circus, killed her handler, Walter Eldridge. The circus employees stated he was the eighth man she had killed. Authorities ordered her executed, so the circus owner wrapped chains around her neck, and hanged her from a construction derrick.

Mary's death has been documented in numerous publications, including an infamous photograph supposedly showing her hanging. However, the authenticity of the photo is in much doubt.

1920 A Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey circus elephant, Sanchen, steps on her trainer while learning a new trick. The man, Charles Herbert, was seriously hurt and "there's doubt he'll survive". New York Times, March 24, 1920.

1922 An elephant, frightened by barking dogs, breaks away from a circus train and tears down fences and overturns cars in North Carolina. New York Times, October 11, 1922.

1924 A fire at the Ringling Brothers circus winter headquarters kills a large, black ox, and seriously frightens both elephants and horses, but none were hurt. New York Times, February 3, 1924.

1927 A train crashed into the Hagenback-Wallace circus elephant herd as they were being moved. One rider was crushed under one of the elephants knocked to the ground, while three others tossed their riders and stampeded through the streets. At least four other circus employees were seriously hurt, and one of the elephants died. The circus was on its way to a memorial for the Hammond, Indiana train wreck of 1918 that killed many circus people. New York Times, July 11, 1927.

1929 An elephant broke loose from the Christy Brothers circus winter quarters and destroyed several fences before a dog barking at a farm house seemed to calm it down. New York Times, March 29, 1929.

1929 Black Diamond, a Al G. Barnes circus elephant, knocked down his former trainer and grabbed his new employer, Eva Donohoe, fatally injuring her. The decision was made to kill Black Diamond since, it was rumored, Mrs. Donohoe was not his first kill. He was taken out into a field and shot between 50 and 100 times before he finally died. New York Times, October 14, 1929, and the Texas Observer, October 1, 2012.

1932 An elephant trainer gave a baby elephant bootleg whiskey, for "colic", and the baby subsequently fell and broke her leg. Shooting her was "out of the question" because her value "was too high". They set the leg. New York Times, April 7, 1932.

1935 Prince, an Al G. Barnes circus elephant, gored and killed an elephant trainer preparing a group of the elephants for a movie. New York Times, May 22, 1935.

1935 Elephants in the Atterbury Brothers show circus stampede, causing injury to several people, and killing a nine year old girl. One of the elephants named Virginia, was frightened by a large dog that snapped at her, and caused her to charge through the tent before she was finally subdued. New York Times, June 7, 1935.

(What was especially interesting about this story was the note that the elephant trainer was being held for a possible charge of second-degree manslaughter. This is only the second instance I know where circus people were actually charged a crime when one of their elephants hurt or killed someone. The second one is detailed towards the end of the listing.)

1936 Major, the dominate elephant in the Cole Brothers-Clyde Beatty circus, attacked and seriously injured the lead elephant trainer during a training session. A few weeks later, Major is shot by circus employees. New York Times, January 19, 1936.

1936 Tribly, a one eyed elephant owned by Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey circus, killed a circus worker when he frightened her out of a sound sleep. New York Times, October 9, 1936.

1936 Cole Brothers-Clyde Beatty elephant Jumbo 2nd was given bottles of soda by trainers. The elephant dropped one, breaking the glass. It then ate the glass, and died a short time later. New York Times, November 27, 1936.

1937 Rosie, a Works Project Administration (WPA) circus elephant, escaped from the vacant store where she was housed, and walked through Brooklyn towards the grounds where the Ringling Brothers circus was held. Rosie was a former Ringling Brothers elephant, and conjecture was, she missed her old herd.

(Circuses were having a great deal of difficulty during the Depression. Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey was no exception; a year later, it will ask workers to take a 25% cut in pay. Circus unemployment led to the Works Project Administration (WPA) circus, the only state run circus in the US.)

1938 Mabel, from the Hagenbeck-Wallace circus, killed a trainer, George Page. The trainer "struck the elephant with a bull-hook and the beast retaliated by butting him into the door of a feed truck." New York Times, July 4, 1938.

1938 Elephants from the Al G. Barnes circus, a subsidiary of Ringling Brothers, drove two elephants through the picket line of workers on strike. "The circus drove a pair of elephants through the street, the sheriff said, in what he termed an effort to break up a picket line of an estimated 1,000 Janesville union members and sympathizers." Chicago Daily Tribute, July 20, 1938.

1939 A Russell Brothers circus employee and elephant were killed in an accident, and one elephant, Elsie, escaped for some time in the Northern Virginia countryside. New York Times, August 7, 1939.

1940 On February 20, a fire broke out in the winter quarters of the Cole Brothers circus. "Six lions, two tigers, and two leopards, all regarded as so dangerous that they could not be released, burned to death in their barred enclosures." Among the other animals lost was an elephant that could not be rescued before the fire reached it. New York Times, February 21, 1940.

1941 Early November in South Carolina, eleven elephants in the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey circus die under mysterious circumstances. The elephants are supposedly poisoned with arsenic, and a circus worker is initially arrested and charged with their deaths. He's eventually cleared.

Later, people speculated that the elephants were poisoned by plant growth contaminated by a chemical factory next door to where the elephants were housed in a previous location. However, nothing was ever proven and the cause was never determined. November, 1941. Numerous publications including the New York Times and the Chicago Tribune.

1942 The menagerie tent of the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey Circus caught on fire, killing 45 animals, including four elephants. "In fifteen minutes the tent had burned, cages were charred, the howling of caged 'cats' had heralded their fierce death, and the rout of elephants, zebras, and camels had subsided to a tense quiet." New York Times, August 5, 1942.

1943 A nasty little boy sicced his dog on Gilbert Brothers elephants heading to the train, causing a stampede through the streets of Newark, New Jersey. It took several hours to

finally calm the elephants, and return them to the train. Luckily, no one was hurt or killed. No word in the article whether the little brat was punished. New York Times, June 7, 1943.

1943 Old Pitt, last surviving elephant from Robinson's Great Combination Show, was struck and killed by lightning in Montana while part of the Cole Brothers Circus. The Elephant Database, August 7, 1934.

1944 Pearl, a former Ringling Brothers circus elephant, was led into a grave dug for her and then shot. She had hurt her foot two years earlier, and it never healed properly. New York Times, March 4, 1944.

1947 A young elephant with the Ringling Brothers circus grabbed an elderly woman as they paraded past, causing the woman to be thrown to the ground. New York Times, July 4, 1947.

1947 A 79 year old Hamid Morton circus employee was found trampled to death in a train car containing three elephants. New York Times, November 7, 1947.

1948 A trainer for the Ringling Brothers circus, Hugo Schmidt, is charged with cruelty to animals for "wilfully torturing an elephant". An employee with the ASPCA witnessed Schmidt beating the elephant about the ears and eyes with a three-and-a-half foot hickory club, as well as punching the elephant in the stomach with it. The Judge dismissed the case, admonishing Schmidt "to take this as a lesson to be more gentle in the future with animals". New York Times, May 5, 1948.

1948 A King Brothers circus elephant, Alice, broke loose in Malone, New York, and went on a rampage for several hours. She knocked down telephone poles, dented cars, and damaged a house and shed. No one was injured and Alice was re-captured. New York Times, June 6, 1948.

1949 An elephant traveling in a circus truck in West Virginia broke out of the truck and refused to budge out of the way on the busy highway. She held up traffic for several hours until a farmer with cornbread lured her back to the truck. New York Times, March 26, 1949.

Incidents from 1950-Today

The numbers of elephants traveling in a circus decrease significantly towards the end of the 1900s. To be expected, the number of negative incidents also decrease, but the severity of the many of incidents remains the same*.

1950 Dolly, a Ringling Brothers elephant, seized a five year old boy about his waist, threw him to the ground, and stepped on his head. Two days later, Dolly was killed with cyanide, despite many protests who recommended she be given to a zoo, instead. Chillicothe Constitution Tribune, March 29, 1950.

1951 Central Park Zoo trades Chang, a 25 year old bull, for two younger female elephants and a llama. The zoo decided Chang was too dangerous after it had injured several keepers. The final destination for the elephant will either be Metro Goldwyn-Mayer, or Ringling Brothers Circus. "Both outfits, it was explained, have had some success with recalcitrant elephants." Chances are Chang will show up later, but under a different name. New York Times, January 26, 1951.

1951 Four young elephants, frightened by flapping flags, panicked during an indoor parade and ended up breaking the rib of their trainer before being calmed and chained. New York Times, February 24, 1951.

1951 A trainer is injured by nine "hot and excited" elephants in a railroad car, and had to be hospitalized. He ends up losing his thumb. He'd lost one arm in an earlier elephant mishap. Since the event is in Sarasota, Florida, I'm assuming the elephants are Ringling Brothers, though the story doesn't note the circus. New York Times, March 8, 1951.

1952 A large animal truck and trailer owned by Cole Brothers circus overturns, killing a llama, and allowing two elephants to escape. The smaller elephant stayed near the truck, but the other larger elephant, disappeared into the surrounding forest.

1952 A King Brothers and Cristiani circus truck overturned, throwing two elephants through the roof of the trailer. They were injured, but still mobile. New York Times, July 28, 1952.

1953 An 18 year old dies when supposedly an elephant he was working with grabbed him and tossed him over the elephant's head. He'd only joined the Diano Brothers circus a few weeks before the event. New York Times, August 12, 1953.

1955 An elephant escaped from its owner, breaking down fences before being re-captured. New York Times, April 19, 1955.

1955 Vicki, a Ringling Brothers elephant, escaped from an amusement park into the countryside near Charlotte, North Carolina. Veteran elephant handlers attempted to catch her, but it was a group of high school football players and volunteer fireman who finally brought her in. Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, September 17, 1955.

1955 An elephant hit by a car in Orlando, Florida, dropped dead in the circus grounds later in the day. New York Times, November 30, 1955.

1956 Two baby elephants escaped the Ringling brothers show before an appearance in Madison Square Gardens. Forty police tried to capture them, beating at them with clubs, and holding on to their tails. However, it was bringing two adult elephants to the area that finally reigned the babies in. New York Times, April 4, 1956.

1956 An 1800 pound baby elephant loses its balance and falls on a family of 4 at the Ringling Brothers menagerie. Luckily, no one was seriously hurt—including the baby elephant. New York Times, June 14, 1965.

1956 Ringling Brothers elephant Emily, suffering from illness over several weeks, collapsed and died while being moved to the train. She was on her way to another circus showing. The circus employees sawed off her chains, and left her body for sanitation workers to manage. New York Times, May 14, 1956.

1956 Forty-two Ringling Brothers elephants stampede in along the Washington D. C. train tracks before handlers get them under control. New York Times, May 25, 1956.

1958 A Hagan Brothers elephant named Dorothy killed a circus worker, Donald Lloyd. Dorothy knocked Lloyd to the ground, and then stood on her head on his body. New York Times, November 25, 1958.

1960 One elephant begins to crush a man in an elephant trailer in the Cristiani Brothers circus. Another elephant grabs the man with her trunk and tossed him out the trailer. The news story claims the second elephant saved the man, which is true, but it was unlikely that the elephant was being altruistic. New York Times, May 6, 1960.

1961 Jewel, a Wirth circus elephant, seriously injured her trainer, Eric Frodelius, as she was being led into the ring. The incident occurred in front of over 3000 spectators, who weren't aware he was being attacked until the end. New York Times, March 26, 1961.

1961 An elephant that had been giving rides in a shopping mall parking lot in San Angelo, Texas, suddenly went on a rampage, killing a passer-by, James John Orr, and seriously injuring her trainer. The Spokesman-Review, April 25, 1961.

1962 A Mills Brothers circus truck crashed and caught fire. Luckily, the circus employee was able to free the two elephants in the truck before they were killed. New York Times, November 27, 1962.

1963 Seven elephants stampeded during a circus parade in Oklahoma. The elephants' keeper was thrown off the lead elephant and seriously hurt. New York Times, June 26, 1963.

1966 An 8 year old elephant was killed when it broke away from a tourist attraction and was hit by a semi-truck. New York Times, April 13, 1966.

Appendix B: List of Circus Elephant Incidents

After the elephant named Janet broke out of the circus tent in Florida in 1992 and was subsequently shot, an unnamed circus official told a People Magazine reporter that such incidents were "terribly rare. It's the first one I can recall."

The reality is that negative incidents between humans and elephants are quite common, especially when you consider how few elephants there are in the country (there are only about 500 elephants in the United States, today, and half are in zoos or sanctuaries). In this Appendix, I list out negative incidents I've been able to discover related to circus elephants in the United States since 1800. Note, I don't guarantee that the list is complete, as many incidents were never reported, or the reports have been lost to time.

Incidents From 1800 to 1849

1816 In 1816 one of the first elephants in the US, known as Old Bett (Big Bett or Betty) was shot and killed by a farmer by the name of Daniel Davis. Records differ as to why he killed the elephant. Some accounts say he did so because he considered it sinful for Old Bett to perform on a Sunday; others state he killed the elephant because he was enraged that the elephant's owner was charging people like him a quarter to see her, and he was about to lose his home.

1826 Little Bett (or Betty) was following her trainer across a bridge on the way out of town when she was shot in Chepachet, Rhode Island. Six (or seven, accounts vary) men were found accountable.

1839 December 31, 1839, an elephant named Columbus attacked and killed his keeper's horse, and then killed the keeper. It tore off down the road outside New Orleans in a rampage, killing a drayman and his two donkeys. Spying a black man sitting on a fence, the elephant smashed down the fence and grabbed and killed the man. The man was a slave, so Columbus' owner was compelled to pay the slave owner $1,800 for the elephant's actions. Columbus was successfully caught after it had rampaged for four hours. It died in 1854 when it fell through a bridge. Daily Alta California, 1870.

1849 According to a Sacramento Daily Union article from 1892, an elephant named Hannibal struck and killed a man who had given the elephant water.

1969 Lightning hit a circus tent pole being raised by an elephant, killing the elephant and injuring two circus workers. New York Times, August 21, 1969.

1973 The Ringling Brothers circus contacted the police in order to have them kill 14 year old Tyler. Tyler had gone after her trainer several times that day and "had lost her fear of people", according to circus officials. The police fired two shots from a high powered rifle into Tyler's head as she lay quietly, tranquilized by the circus vet. New York Times, October 1, 1973.

(Kenneth Feld, current owner of Ringling Brothers, would have been a circus executive in 1973.)

1975 Two Carson and Barnes circus baby elephants, Lily and Isa, escaped the circus while it was in Oklahoma, and managed to elude searchers for over two weeks. July 28, 1975.

1976 Carson and Barnes elephant Barbara was being used to help right an overturned truck when she was spooked and escaped into the Arkansas countryside. She remained at large for over a week before being re-captured. New York Times, October 25, 1976.

1977 Colonel, a Circus Vargas elephant, escapes from a broken down truck into the Florida Everglades. It takes six days to find and capture him. St. Petersburg Times, December 29, 1977.

1978 A Hawthorne Circus chained elephant killed an employee, David Farr, in Chicago. The man had been pestering the elephant—pushing at her face, and putting his hand in her mouth. Evidently, he was trying to get the elephant to perform. New York Times, March 13, 1978 and the Leader-Post, March 13, 1978.

1981 Police were surprised to encounter an elephant walking down the middle of a highway, north of Columbus, Ohio, trailing a four foot chain. The elephant continued down the highway until the police fetched her keeper from the Carson & Barnes circus.

1982 A Ringling Brothers elephant that had just finished towing a stagecoach with children ran out of the arena, crashed into a showgirl dressing room, and tried to enter the shower. New York Times, March 14, 1982.

1982 On May 14, five elephants escaped the Carson and Barnes circus and fell over a 25 foot ledge into a coal pit. One of the elephants was crushed to death under the weight of the others. The Telegraph-Herald, May 17, 1982.

1982 Charges were dropped against two animal handlers after pathology reports showed a young woman had been killed by a blow from an elephant, not from being beaten to death with a baseball bat. The men were still charged a misdemeanor for not reporting

her death. The Milwaukee-Sentinel, Sept. 28, 1982.

1983 The owner of the Hoxie Bros. circus is injured by an elephant named Janet, who had stepped on him. He was hospitalized for 100 days with a broken back and hips. His injuries are serious enough to cause him to sell his circus—including Janet, to the Great American Circus. Janet is the same elephant mentioned at the beginning of this chapter. She's featured a little later, in a tragic incident in 1992. Sun Sentinel (Florida), February 5, 1992.

1983 An elephant named Toomai gored well known animal trainer Roman Schmitt in the leg at Circus World. The elephant was sold to Gary Jacobson, elephant trainer at Ringling Brothers. The Victoria Advocate, April 17, 1983.

1983 On May 25th, a spectator supposedly tried to blow into the trunk of a Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. circus elephant named Freda. She wrapped her trunk around him and flung him to the ground, severely injuring him. May 25, 1983.

1983 A Chicago radio station manager, Diana Migala, fell off an elephant during a race called the "Pachyderm 500", and was seriously injured. The Albany Herald, July 18, 1983.

1984 An elephant being used to raise a circus tent was electrocuted (most likely by lightening), falling on her trainer, Tim Mericash, and killing him. The incident happened in Springhill, Louisiana. Ellensburg Daily Record, April 18, 1984.

1984 The Atlanta Zoo claims that an elephant named Twinkles died while at a farm where she was sent to aid her crippled legs. However, an investigation brought out the information that the zoo had lent Twinkles to a small traveling circus, where the mistreatment she received led to her untimely death. This incident led to exposure of the close relationship between circuses and zoos at the time. Miami Herald, June 7, 1984.

1985 Freda the Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. elephant responsible for injuring a man in 1983 was chained with seven other elephants to stakes in a parking lot. An inebriated women attempted to climb her, and was killed when Freda threw her. July 7, 1985.

1987 An elephant with the Great American Circus broke away from handlers and headed to her feeding area on July 10. A four year old girl was injured falling off her back, and another child was injured when the elephant rushed past. Luckily, both children only suffered minor injuries. AP, July 10, 1987.

1988 Susie, an elephant with a 'traveling zoo' named Wonder Zoo was extremely ill and undernourished when arriving in Gainesville, Florida. Eventually, she had to be euthanized. Columbus Dispatch, September 4, 1988.

1989 A bull elephant named Casey killed trainer Joe Allen at Busch Gardens in February.

He's included in this list because Busch Gardens sold Casey to Ringling Brothers.

1989 An elephant named Irene broke away while giving rides on February 4. Several people had to be rescued from her back, but no one was hurt. Orlando Sentinel, February 5, 1992.

1990 An elephant attacks her trainer in the Great American Circus in Reading, PA. She also breaks through a barrier and runs towards the spectators, scattering them. According to witnesses, the trainer had been hitting the elephant in the side of the head before the attack. Orlando Sentinel, February 4, 1992.

1990 A Hanneford Family Circus worker is killed by an elephant named Carol, after she was startled by a passing car. Carol is later shot in the shoulder by an unknown assailant while in Tupelo, Mississippi. performing with the Ringling Brothers circus. Sun Sentinel, June 21, 1990.

1991 Several witnesses tell of Great American Circus employees beating a baby elephant with a shovel until the elephant shrieked. The elephant's shrieks were so loud, they could be heard within a nearby restaurant. The employees stopped when they noticed they were being watched. Burlington Free Press, September 19, 1991.

1992 Janet (aka Kelly), who earlier had injured circus owner Leonard Tucker, was being ridden by a woman and several children before the Great American circus show started in Palm Bay, Florida. She suddenly rammed into the cage around the circle, and then kept ramming the cage. They tried to take the children off the elephant, but she tossed a handler several feet away. She broke out of the circus tent and took off down the street. A police man tried to rescue the children and was also tossed several feet. Eventually, another handler came up on another elephant, and was able to help get the kids off. The woman jumped off on her own.

Janet headed back into the circus tent, running through crowds of panicked circus patrons. Fearing for their safety, police started shooting Kelly. The continued shooting her, until she died. Various publications, February 1, 1992.

1992 An elephant in the Tarzan Zerbini International circus stopped suddenly, causing the elephants following to bump into it, as well as a barrier around the ring. Several spectators received minor injuries in their panic to move to safety. Chicago Tribune, July 17, 1992.

1993 Axel Gautier was knocked down and killed by an elephant he was working with at Ringling Bothter's Elephant Farm in Florida. The News-Journal, May 8, 1993.

1993 An elephant chained to nine others crushed a man to death in the Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. Circus. The man was crushed by being pinned against a wall. New York Times, June

7, 1993.

1993 The Hawthorne Corporation loans Tyke to Circus America for a show in the Jaffa Mosque, where she charged through an entryway, tearing down a wall, and causing $10,000 in damage on April 21. Also in 1993 while with Circus America, Tyke bolted from a tent while the show was in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The Vindicator, August 24, 1994.

1993 Tyke, injured an elephant keeper while they were rehearsing for a show in Minot, ND in July. The keeper suffered serious injuries. St. Louis Dispatch, August 25, 1994.

1994 A Jordan circus elephant named Sue was giving a ride to two children when she tossed her trainer to the ground and stepped on him, seriously injuring him. Another trainer trying to intervene was also injured. AP, April, 1994.

1994 A Circus International elephant named Jack rammed a fence around the arena, knocking one spectator into another row, and pinning nine other people. Boston Globe, August 15, 1994.

1994 In one of the better filmed and more well known elephant incidents, the Hawthorne Corporation elephant elephant Tyke, mentioned earlier, but at that time leased to Circus International, went on a rampage. She killer her trainer, severely injured an elephant groomer and circus publicist, and ran wild through the streets until she was shot down. It took 86 shots to kill Tyke. Various publications, August 22, 1994.

1994 Bela Tabak from the King Royal circus beat his young elephant, Mickey, so badly, it was forced to the ground, screaming. Tabak had his license to handle elephants suspended by the USDA for five years. Oregonian, September 20, 1994.

1994 An interpreter for the Moscow State Circus was severely injured when she was attacked by a circus elephant just before a scheduled appearance on *Live with Regis and Kathie Lee*. Los Angeles Times, October 11, 1994.

1994 Mickey from the King Royal circus slightly injured a 3 year old girl. Oregonion, December 24, 1994.

1995 Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. elephants were also involved in a rampage in Hanover, Pennsylvania, damaging both buildings and cars. One elephant was injured. A spectator noted that the elephant trainer was screaming at the elephants, beating at them with his bullhook. Gettysburg Times, May 19, 1995.

1995 While loading circus equipment, a Tarzan Zerbini International circus employee was stepped on by an elephant named Rosie, who was startled by a loud noise. The man was seriously injured. News-Sentinel (Fort Wayne, IN), July 4, 1995.

1995 Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. elephant Frieda, responsible for an earlier death and injury was finally retired after being involved with an altercation with another elephant, Debbie, during a performance in Queens. New York Times, July 11, 1995.

1996 Joyce, a Circus Vargas elephant, died under anesthesia while having dental surgery. She was found to be suffering from advanced tuberculosis—a disease that can be transmitted between elephants and humans. She had lost over 1,000 pounds in weight over the last 10 months, but still had to perform the day before she died. Reuters, March 11, 1997.

1996 The Jordon World Circus elephant named Sue, mentioned earlier in an incident from 1994, knocked her trainer down at the Central Wyoming Fairgrounds. Sue was supposedly frightened by a horse. The trainer received minor injuries. Casper Star Tribune, June 15, 1996.

1996 A Circus Vargas elephant named Hattie died one day after being in a performance, while on transport back to her owners, the Hawthorne Corporation. She collapsed while being off-loaded from the truck. San Jose Mercury News, August 10, 1996.

1997 A King Royal Bros. circus elephant named Heather was found dead in a trailer that also contained two other elephants and eight llamas. The truck was in a parking lot, and the temperature inside was 120 degrees. Necropsy results stated that Heather died of salmonella poisoning, brought on by malnutrition and stress. Albuquerque Journal, August 14, 1997.

1998 Another of the elephants leading to the ASPCA et al vs. FEI lawsuit, Kenny, died after being made to perform in the Ringling Brothers circus while ill. Various news sources, January 31, 1998.

1998 An elephant brought in for a high school circus, Tonya, knocked down her trainer during an act, opened a door, and escaped from the building. She was recovered a quarter mile away. Ledger Enquirer (AP), February 17, 1998.

1998 Several Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. circus elephants were found with bullhook wounds. USDA inspectors noted wounds on two different occasions in June. A USDA press release noted that the circus used the bullhook abusively on several different elephants. USDA APHIS Press Release, April 20, 1999.

1999 Luna, a Royal Hanneford circus elephant, became disoriented and lost after performing a trick, and stepped out of the ring into the audience. There were some minor injuries as people moved to get out of Luna's way. Poughkeepsie Journal, February 23, 1999.

1999 One of the elephants that led to the ASPCA et al vs. FEI lawsuit, Benjamin, dies in a

pond while being transported via truck.

1999 A Tarzan Zerbini International circus employee is severely injured when an elephant broke free of restraints. An ambulance worker notes the smell of alcohol on the man's breath. Duluth News-Tribune, April 21, 1999.

2000 USDA inspectors found numerous violations in the care and handling of elephants at the Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. circus. One elephant bled while she urinated, another had a partially paralyzed tail. Daytona Beach News Journal, February 12, 2000.

2000 A Ramos family circus elephant, Kenya, trampled and killed one of her owners after breaking free from restraints. Kenya died two weeks later from intestinal difficulties. St. Petersburg Times, January 27, 2000.

2000 An elephant escaped from the Culpepper and Merriweather Circus in Yucca Valley, California, seriously injuring a ticket taker. She was eventually recaptured. The Intelligencer, April 21, 2000.

2002 Elephants named Tory and Mary escaped the Shrine circus in Wisconsin, injuring a child and damaging a building and a truck. Reuters, June 18, 2002.

2002 Tonya, owned by Robert Childress and leased to various circuses escaped and fled into woods near Easley, South Carolina. She was eventually re-captured. This was her fourth escape.

2002 A handler for the Sterling and Reid circus is charged with animal cruelty after being accused of beating an elephant severely enough to cause bloody lacerations. The Virginia-Pilot, August 25, 2002.

2003 An elephant in the Bobby Roberts circus fled through a residential area after being spooked by a motorcycle. She was eventually recaptured. The Daily Record, December 24, 3004.

2003 Authorities seize Delphi, an elephant owned by the Hawthorn Corporation (an agency leasing animals to circuses), because of severe health issues. She was turned over to the elephant sanctuary in Tennessee. Various publications.

2004 Ringling Brothers personnel were training a baby elephant named Ricardo, having it get up on a tall stool, when the elephant fell off, breaking both its back legs. Ricardo had to be euthanized. Wildlife Advocacy Project, the event happened on August 5, 2004.

2004 Two Hawthorne Corporation employees were injured by an elephant in the company's training grounds. PETA, November 2004, in McHenry County, Illinois.

2004 A Liebel Family Circus elephant named Nosey attacked a circus worker who was attending to the elephants water container. The elephant picked the man up with her tusk and threw him down an incline. The worker required stitches for a head injury. PETA, July 4, 2004, in Clinton, Iowa.

2004 A George Carden circus elephant attacked an arena worker at the El Maida Shrine circus. The man was seriously injured, requiring surgery. PETA, August 29, 2004, in El Paso, Texas.

2005 A Tarzan Zerbini circus worker, Pierre Spenle, fell into a trailer with three elephants and was trampled to death. CBS News, February 11, 2005.

2005 A Ringling Brothers employee, David Mannes, suffered serious injuries at the company's elephant compound in Florida when an elephant named Tova knocked Mannes down and kicked him. PETA, April 13, 2005.

2005 A Clyde Beatty-Cole Bros. circus elephant named Jewel grabbed a woman's wrist with her trunk when the woman reached out towards her at a county fair in Pleasant Township, Pennsylvania. The women was treated and released for a sprained wrist and possible torn ligaments. PETA, August 25, 2005.

2005 Two Ringling Brothers elephants were startled by a barking dog and ran around the arena, uncontrolled, for a time. They both received minor injuries from brushing against arena seats. PETA, December 12, 2005.

2007 An Enterprising Elephants employee was seriously injured by an elephant while performing at the Arizona Renaissance Festival in Apache Junction, Arizona. PETA, March 6, 2007.

2008 While in Kansas, two elephants owned by Animal Encounters broke lose when startled by a tornado siren. They caused no damage or injuries before being re-captured. KARE News, June 6, 2008.

2009 An elephant giving children a ride bumps into a stairway where other adults and children waiting for a ride are standing. Several of the people suffered minor injuries. Times Herald-Record, March 7, 2009.

2009 One of the Animal Encounters elephants that escaped in 2008, Kamba, escaped again in Oklahoma, and was hit by an SUV. The people in the SUV were not harmed, but Kamba suffered several injuries. EnidNews.com, November 5, 2009.

2010 A Ringling Brothers elephant took a wrong turn and broke through a door leading into the arena during a circus pre-show. The elephant ambled past the spectators on the area floor, before it was placed back under control. The State, February 7, 2010.

2010 An elephant named Dumbo, performing in the Irem Shrine Circus, kicked a handler named Andrew Anderton, killing him. The Hamid Circus staged the show, and the elephant was leased from Joe Frisco's Wonderful World of Animals. The accident was investigated because of a possibility Dumbo had been shocked by a live wire. Huffington Post, April 10, 2010.

2010 A Carson & Barnes elephant named Isa stepped on her trainer, moderately injuring him. PETA, quoting a USDA report.

2010 A Carson & Barnes elephant named Viola, leased to Cole Brothers Circus, escaped, sending circus patrons running before falling into a ravine injuring herself. The circus claimed she had been spooked by a rabbit. WSLS News, April 28, 2010.

2011 Feld Entertainment, Inc., and the USDA reach a settlement agreement, with Feld paying $270,000 in civil fines for violations of the Animal Welfare Act. This the largest fine ever paid for AWA violations. USDA Press Release, November 28, 2011.

2013 Carol, the same elephant that accidentally killed a trainer in 1990, was shot in the early morning hours in April, in Tupelo, Mississippi, as she slept in a tent in a parking lot. She was on lease to Ringling Brothers for the Gold Unit circus. Various news sources.

So much for these incidents being "terribly rare".

* My thanks to Performing Animals Welfare Society (PAWS), People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), and the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) for providing lists of negative incidents post 1950, several of which I incorporated into this list.

1849 The same Sacramento Daily Union article mentioned that an elephant named Columbus killed his keeper, as well as two camels, and a llama. No indication if this was the same Columbus mentioned earlier.

Incidents from 1850 to 1899

One can see the impact of increasing numbers of circus elephants in the country in the latter part of the 1800s. More elephants equate to significantly more negative incidents between people and pachyderms.

1850 Pizarro, with the Raymond & Warings Menagerie, Museum, and Circus United killed his keeper, two camels, and then ravaged the countryside. However, other reports have Pizarro dying in 1847, so there is some confusion about when (and if) this event happened. Considering the reference to two camels, this could be the same incident with the elephant named Columbus, in 1849.

1854 In June of 1854, the same Hannibal from the 1849 incident broke free of a menagerie, attacking several horse drawn carriages, killing the horses, and badly injuring several men. From a New York Times story about the event, horses were the primary target of the elephant—the people were hurt only because they were in the way. Eventually, Hannibal tired and was recaptured. The Sacramento Daily Union, 1892.

1856 While traveling from Philadelphia to the southern US in 1856, an elephant was lost overboard from the steamer ship Thomas Swan as the craft was tossed about by a storm. Elephants were transported on deck in those days. New York Times, January 16, 1856.

(Today, elephants are still transported on ship decks, but in containers. The elephants that Tom Rider worked with in Europe were transported from the US on the ship's deck.)

1862 In 1862, a Van-Amburgh & Co elephant named Hannibal (possibly the same from the earlier escapade), killed a "partially deranged" man who irritated the elephant (the 'partially deranged' may be redundant, since anyone irritating an elephant has to be deranged). The elephant's owner sawed off the elephant's tusks to prevent him from further injuring other people. The Richmond Times Dispatch, October 18, 1962.

1867 Hyatt Frost of the Van Amburgh Menagerie recounted a fight between an elephant named Tippo Sahib and his handlers that happened the week before. The elephant became aggressive when a new handler was employed. The handler grabbed nine assistants, forced Tippo to the ground using ropes, and beat the elephant mercilessly until it was subjugated. During the beating, a dog that was a companion to Tippo attacked the

handler and had to be forcibly removed from the room. New York Times, November 11, 1867.

1867 Romeo killed his handler, William "Canada Bill" Williams, in the Forepaugh circus winter quarters. "Mr. Williams, up to the time of his death, had entire control of the animal", according to an article in the 1868 Daily Alta California.

Romeo had quite a reputation. In 1865, he battered down the building in which he was held and terrorized the community until a marksman shot the elephant in the left eye. Romeo survived, to the detriment of William Williams. And he wasn't finished, either.

1869 Forepaugh's Romeo was again involved in a violent incident, this time in Indiana. A female elephant escaped her bounds and joined Romeo where he was chained. When the handlers attempted to remove the female, Romeo picked one of them up and threw him several feet. He also crushed a dog that ran at him. His handler, Tom Williams, shot Romeo's trunk with buck shot. While the elephant was reacting in pain, Williams managed to wrap chains around his ankles. He and assistants yanked on the chains until Romeo was laid flat. They they beat Romeo with clubs 8 hours, "until Romeo cried, Hold, enough!", according to the Daily Alta California, December 25, 1869.

One is not surprised that Romeo is rumored to have killed seven elephant handlers.

1871 Another *Daily Alta California* newspaper article recounts the tale of when John Robinson's elephant, Old Emperor, was set upon by indians from a nearby village. In pain from several arrow wounds, Old Emperor decimated the village until the elephant was rescued by the circus people. According to the article, Old Emporer was taken by a group of young braves wanting to create a sensation in their village. I couldn't verify the truth of the story, though it is known that Robinson did have an elephant with this name in 1871.

1874 In a circus show in Virginia City, a miner tossed an elephant a chew of tobacco. The elephant grabbed at the man, tearing his clothes, but not causing him direct injury. Daily Alta California, 1874.

1875 A procession including two elephants frightened several horses pulling carriages along the road, causing several people to be injured and damaging various carts and wagons. Sacramento Daily Record, May 14, 1875.

1875 P. T. Barnum's elephant Betsey broke out of her quarters in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and attacked a tiger in its cage. The tiger escaped and managed to avoid the elephant. Betsey then broke out of the building and wondered down to the railroad depot, where she tried to knock a train engine over—only giving up when she burned her trunk. Her keepers tried to get her to return to her quarters, but she knocked one of them over. She lifted one of the circus boys in her trunk, but then gently let him go again. Finally, an entire crew of circus workers surrounded her, beating her with clubs and poking her with

pitchforks until they could get her tethered. Daily Alta California, December 5, 1875.

1878 Several elephants in the Robinson Circus got into a fight while crossing a river. One elephant, Chief, threw another, Bismarck, over a bridge. Bismarck was saved from drowning with the help of several circus people and another elephant. New York Times, May 4, 1878.

Elephants are excellent swimmers, which makes me wonder whether Bismarck was saved, or just re-captured.

1879 Robinson's Chief is at it again, this time killing his keeper, John King. Los Angeles Herald, 1880.

1880 Chief isn't finished. Ringling Brothers master of transportation, Tom Sullivan, entered Chief's enclosure while drunk and prodded Chief with a bullhook. An enraged Chief picked Sullivan up, squeezed him with his trunk, and then dropped his limp, dead body. New York Times, December 26, 1880.

1881 Willis Wilson, a "colored" man according to newspaper accounts, was attacked by an elephant on a circus train in Virginia. Though severely injured, he wasn't taken for medical help until the train reached its final destination. New York Times, November 16, 1881.

1882 Four elephants escaped the Barnum Circus, injuring several people and causing general havoc. "Patrick Ryan and his wife were knocked down by one of the elephants. The former was probably fatally injured." New York Times, August 3, 1882.

1883 Pilot, a Barnum and Bailey elephant, became so difficult to work with that the circus owners decided on an unusual course: to have him killed. Typically, elephants weren't destroyed when they killed people, because they were so valuable.

However, Pilot had a long career of killing and injuring keepers, as well as the occasional dog that ventured too close. On this day in 1883, Pilot attacked another elephant, and then wouldn't be subdued—even attacking a handler who could normally work with him. Pilot was shot with a gun that fired a 48 caliber ball. He died after three shots. New York Times, April 6, 1883.

1883 Queen, from the Barnum circus, killed Harry Packer, a Barnum circus employee. "The elephant was standing beside one of the circus wagons, and Packer undertook to pass between her and the wagon. As he did so, the brute leaned over toward the wagon so heavily as to nearly upset it. The pressure broke several of Packer's ribs and flattened him almost as thin as a board." New York Times article, August 28, 1883.

1885 A Barnum elephant, Albert, attacked a circus helper, James Sweeney, striking the

man with its tusks and feet, and throwing him to the ground. After Sweeney died, Albert was taken to a ravine, his heart and brain marked with chalk, and thirty-three members of the Keene Light Guard shot him. New York Times, July 21, 1885.

1885 The elephant Empress attacked John Kimberline, 20 years of age, as he tried to make a bed of hay under a lion cage in the tent where she was chained. Empress stealthily approached Kimberline, grabbed him and threw him violently against the tent pole. According to newspaper accounts, this is the third person she had killed that season. New York Times, September 1, 1885.

1885 The jewel of P. T. Barnum's circus, Jumbo, is accidentally killed by a train during off-loading. When his trainer realized a freight train was fast approaching the elephant, he yelled at Jumbo to run. Jumbo ran, but in his panic missed a fence opening. When he turned back to go through it, he ran straight into the train. He died within the hour. The train engine was also heavily damaged. New York Times, September 17, 1885.

1885 In October, Empress is at it again, attacking and killing a circus night watchman at the Forepaugh circus winter quarters. The stories note that Empress would never give any indication of dangerous behavior before attacking. She would be seemingly docile, and then suddenly attack.

There is talk of having her put to death, but in those days, what usually happened is the elephant is renamed and sold to another circus. Empress changed hands rather frequently, until she was eventually sold to the Harris Nickle Plate Show, and renamed Gypsy. We'll meet Gypsy again, later in this section. New York Times, October 12, 1885.

1885 A lion killed its trainer and escaped its cage. It entered the elephant house, and attacked an elephant named Bolivar. The elephant crushed the lion to death. New York Times, December 10, 1885.

1886 Though not exactly a circus incident, an elephant named Alva, in the play "Around the World in Eighty Days", grabbed his handler after a performance and slammed him to the ground. The handler, Hazelton, died an hour later. Daily Alta California, October 20, 1886.

1887 In March, an elephant tossed a "Mexican pony" against a leopard's cage. The leopard broke through its cage, and attacked the pony. The leopard then attacked the elephant but was "worsted", according to the news story. As the leopard sat and nursed an injured paw, it's tail stuck out under the door of the building. People grabbed the tail, holding the leopard in place until it could be re-caged. The story doesn't note whether the pony survived. New York Times, March 9, 1887.

1887 Empress severely injures another keeper, Eugene Mordinez, as he tried to calm her. Daily Alta California, July 22, 1887.

1887 A Los Angeles Herald story covers a circus appearing in town. Among the animals in the circus menagerie is Prince, reported to have killed fourteen men, and be over 140 years old. One of the challenges I faced putting this list together was sifting through the elephant stories—to separate the real from the hype that was a hallmark of circus promotion in the 1800s. We know the elephant was not 140 years old, but it wasn't unknown for an elephant to have killed several keepers. Consider this story hype, with a possibility of fact. Los Angeles Herald, October 10, 1887.

1887 Fire has always been the bane of circuses. On November 20, 1887, the main building of Barnum's winter quarter caught fire, killing many of the animals trapped inside. "Six of the elephants were terribly burned. Great pieces of flesh fell from their sides, and their blood spattered the ground as they ran." New York Times, November 20, 1887,

1888 An elephant named Zip, owned by the Shelby Circus, killed her handler in Pennsylvania. The Elephant Database.

1888 Forepaugh's Tip killed an animal handler, John Poffy, when Poffy was trying to unload Tip from a rail car. Some people by the train were teasing Tip, giving him apples spiked with pepper and tobacco. These actions angered the elephant, who then gored and trampled Poffy. Sacramento Daily Union, September 26, 1888.

1889 In December, again in Barnum's circus, one elephant attacked and killed its keeper, while another slipped and fell on top of another worker. From the story, it seems that the second worker survived. New York Times, December 4, 1889.

1890 A Forepaugh Circus elephant named Columbia fell out of its train car and was hit by a freight train. It was badly hurt, but the circus didn't seek medical help for it until almost a month later. By that time it was too late. New York Times, June 27, 1890.

1890 According to another New York Times story, another Forepaugh circus elephant also escaped a train and was wondering the tracks, causing delay to several trains. However, this story said the elephant was re-captured. It could be that multiple elephants had escaped at the same time. Multiple escaped elephants wasn't unheard of for Forepaugh. New York Times, May 25, 1890.

1891 A drunk man went up to a Forepaugh elephant and tried to poor whisky into his trunk. The elephant, Tip, "resented this invitation to drink, and in about five seconds was wiping the ground with his tormentor." The drunk was rescued by circus workers who notified Forepaugh of the event. Forepaugh, knowing that the town would probably delay the circus if they reported the incident, grabbed the man and took him on the train with the circus. According to newspaper story, when the man awoke...

Forepaugh sent for him and told him in his choice vocabulary of adjectives that he was a nice

man to hire out to the show and then get drunk and fight with the elephants the first night. 'You are discharged sir! You are discharged!' the old man thundered, and the fellow sneaked away, utterly collapsed.

San Francisco Call, July 6, 1891

1891 In On July 6, 1891, an elephant in a menagerie giving children rides was frightened by a hot air balloon, and crushed a young child to death. New York Times, July 6, 1891.

1892 An elephant in the Wallace Brothers circus killed his keeper, Joe Anderson. According to the Los Angeles Herald, "The animal became ugly and chased the whole police force and an excited group of citizens." That's the last story on this particular elephant. There was never any follow-up story about it being captured or killed. For all we know, some day some hiker is going to stumble across elephants bones while exploring a nearby wilderness area. Los Angeles Herald, June 3, 1892.

1892 Charley, a Washburn circus elephant, broke loose while being taken to the train, and escaped into a nearby swamp. The next day he was re-captured, but then broke away again. He charged a team of horses, killed a cow, and then headed back into the trees. Insects eventually drove him directly into the swamp waters, where the circus men left him. The story notes that the options considered at the time were re-capturing Charley, feeding him opium laced oats, or getting the militia out to shoot him. New York Times, July 13, 1892.

1893 After three days of frenzied behavior, Zip the elephant dies. Though unusual for the times, a necropsy was performed, and a four foot long iron chain was found in Zip's stomach. Los Angeles Herald, January 5, 1893.

1893 Thirty Barnum & Bailey elephants stampeded while being unloaded at the circus winter headquarters. No one was hurt, and only minor structural damage occurred. A statue of P. T. Barnum was knocked about a bit but wasn't harmed. A crowd of "men and boys", come to watch the unloading, fled in terror. New York Times, May 29, 1893.

1895 A horse hitched to a carriage was spooked by a passing procession of elephants. It ran into a crowd of people, injuring several, and killing two people, including a three year old child. New York Times, March 23, 1895.

1895 The Harris Nickel Plate Circus elephant Gypsy (listed earlier under the name of Empress, and also known as Gipsy and Gyp), came close to killing her trainer (evidently she had killed six trainers, earlier). The trainer fell during a routine and Gypsy accidentally stepped on him. However, "feeling bones breaking" supposedly triggered Gypsy into a frenzied attempt to finish the job. According to the paper, the trainer remarked, "I suppose, when I get well, I will have to Subdue her anew, and show her again that I am master." Reading the next entry demonstrates how well this plan worked. New York

Times, September 1, 1895.

1896 Gypsy reacted to being jabbed with an iron hook by killing the keeper, a man who was normally responsible for the lions. When the dead keeper's body was moved into a building, she tore down a wall trying to get at it. Eventually the circus people calmed her down and moved her into a barn, but when the doors closed, she knocked the doors down. The elephant "had her own way for about four hours", before being recaptured. The San Francisco Call, March 26, 1896.

1896 After killing yet another keeper, the owner of the Harris Nickle Plate Circus decided to have Gypsy electrocuted. "She'll be more value as soap", he states. However, a permit is denied for a public execution. Aspen Tribune, New York Times, and Sacramento Daily Union, December, 1896.

1897 Several cars for the Forepaugh & Sells circus are derailed, including two cars loaded with elephants. The newspaper article didn't mention if any of the elephants were injured. New York Times, September 1, 1897.

1897 Syd, a Robinson and Franklin Bros. circus elephant, grabbed his keeper and tossed him twenty feet. When the master of animals tried to control Syd, the elephant knocked him down. The animal handlers then decided they would subdue Syd, first by chaining him to the ground, and then hitting him with cudgels, and stabbing him with pitchforks. One of the pitchforks went through Syd's ear, and he pulled it loose, himself, and threw it away. When Syd refused to be subdued, they laid straw under him and set him afire. They burned him until "great sheets of his skin fell off". Eventually they put the fire out, covered him with Vaseline and vowed that if he killed another man he would be killed. San Francisco Call, October 19, 1897.

(I can't find anything more on Syd, but did locate a Sid, mentioned in the next section.)

1998 A Forepaugh & Sells circus derails yet again, and yet again, cars containing elephants were knocked over. Several elephants were injured, but none were killed. New York Times, September 27, 1898.

1899 A keeper in the Lemen Brothers circus, Frank Fisher, returned to the tent drunk and attempted to get the elephant, Rajah, to perform. He hugged Rajah, and told him to open his mouth. Rajah crushed the keeper to death. Newspaper accounts stated that Fisher was Rajah's ninth victim. Los Angeles Herald, April 10, 1899.

1899 A William Leggett was killed by an elephant of the Gaskill's Midway Company. Leggett had hit the same elephant with a hammer several weeks prior to Leggett being killed, with the implication being an elephant never forgets. New York Times, October 15, 1899.

Wild Rose

http://www.scaryforkids.com/wild-rose/

The Wild Rose is a scary urban legend about a girl named Elisa Day (or Eliza Day) who was murdered by her boyfriend many years ago. The story inspired the Nick Cave song "Where the Wild Roses Grow".

Many years ago, in Ireland, there was a young woman named Elisa Day. People called her The Wild Rose because they said she was as beautiful as the wild roses that grew down by the river, all bloody and red.

One day, a young man came into town and from the first moment he set eyes on Elisa Day, he knew she was the one. He went to her house, knocked on her door and introduced himself. He took her in his arms and kissed her ruby red lips.

On the second day, the young man came back. He brought her a single red rose and told her she was the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. He asked her to meet him down by the river where the wild roses grew so sweet and scarlet and free.

On the third day, he took her down to the river. She stood on the bank and gazed silently into the water. The man kissed her lips one last time. Then he waited until her back was turned and beat her to death with a rock in his hand. As he killed her, he whispered, "All beauty must die…"

He placed a rose between her teeth, and slid her body into the river and she slowly disappeared beneath the clear, calm surface. Her body was never found and over the years, her real name was forgotten. She was just referred to as The Wild Rose.

Many people claim to have seen her ghost wandering along the banks of the river, where the wild roses grow. Her head is bashed in and blood is running down her face. They say she clutches a single rose in her hand.

In 1765, the Jackson family, Andrew Jackson, Sr., Elizabeth Hutchinson Jackson, and their two children, Hugh and

Robert, immigrated to the American colonies from Northern Ireland following a tumultuous period of political unrest and religious persecution against Protestants from an Anglican-controlled British government. The family entered the colonies in Philadelphia and made the long, slow journey to the rural and rustic Waxhaw Settlement, a region which straddles the North Carolina and South Carolina border. Named for the Waxhaw Indians who lived in the region, Waxhaw Settlement lies southeast of present day Charlotte, North Carolina and was the site of a growing Scotch-Irish farming community. Elizabeth's four sisters had already moved to the area and were awaiting the arrival of the Jackson family from their ancestral home in Carrickfergus, Ireland.

The family settled on the North Carolina side of the border on a 200-acre-tract of land which was poorly suited for farming. Following the death of Andrew, in February of 1767, Elizabeth was forced to move her family to the home of James and Jane Crawford, her sister and brother-in-law who owned a profitable plantation on the South Carolina side of Waxhaw. There, less than a month after the death of the elder Andrew Jackson, Elizabeth gave birth to Andrew Jackson Jr., on March 15, 1767.

"I was born in South Carolina, as I have been told at the plantation whereon James Crawford lived about one mile from the Carolina road of the Waxhaw Creek……"
-- Andrew Jackson, 1824

In the years that followed the birth of Andrew Jr., Elizabeth became the house mother and nurse of the Crawford plantation. Although most accounts record Elizabeth as little more than a maid and poor relation in the Crawford household, some evidence suggests that she was much more than that and was well respected as the plantation's house mother and primary caretaker of the Crawford's eight children and the three Jackson children. Mrs. Crawford had fallen ill and was described, by one Jackson biographer, as being an invalid. It was on the Crawford plantation that that Andrew, his brothers, and his cousins were raised on the heroic tales of Elizabeth's father, Francis Cyrus Hobart Hutchinson, who had defended Carrickfergus during the Seven Years War in Ireland.

In 1780, four years into the American Revolution, Charleston, South Carolina fell to British forces commanded by Lord Charles Cornwallis. Cornwallis began a scorched earth campaign against towns and civilians who were loyal to the Continental forces. When British forces approached Waxhaw following the Battle of Camden, they surprised a tattered and ineffectual patriot army of less than 200 that could not protect the town. The battle and its aftermath on

the town and citizens were devastating and would become known as the Massacre at Waxhaw. This prompted Andrew Jackson Jr., who was 13 years of age, to join a Continental regiment as a messenger and scout.

While on a scouting mission in 1781, Andrew and his brother Robert encountered a British cavalry unit under the command of Colonel Banastre Tarleton. The boys sought refuge at the home of Thomas Crawford, but the dragoons found the boys and immediately took the patriots captive. One of the British officers ordered Andrew to clean his boots, which he refused. The officer attempted to slash the boy with his sword but Andrew deflected the blow leaving a severe gash on his left arm. The incident would leave a visible scar and a disdain for the British that would stay with him until his death.

Elizabeth Jackson secured the release of her two sons through a prisoner exchange between the British and Continentals at Camden, South Carolina. Robert died shortly thereafter from smallpox and Andrew recovered from his wounds and imprisonment to return to his unit. Mrs. Jackson and several ladies of Waxhaw traveled to Charleston, which was still occupied by the British, to render aid to patriot prisoners of war who were being held on prison ships in the Charleston harbor. It was there that she died from cholera in November of 1781. Her belongings were sent back to Waxhaw and the young Andrew Jackson was informed that he had lost his mother and most of his relatives at the hands of the British during the American Revolution.

Jackson would go on to do and be many notable things in his lifetime including: lawyer, U.S. Representative from Tennessee, U.S. Senator from Tennessee, Tennessee Supreme Court Justice, One of three founders of Memphis, Tenn., Major General of the Tennessee Militia, Hero of the War of 1812, Creek Wars, and Seminole Wars, as well as President of the United States……..but one fact always escaped Andrew Jackson! He never knew where his mother was buried!

In 1824 Andrew Jackson wrote a letter to James H. Witherspoon of the Lancaster District, Waxhaw region. In his letter Jackson reveals all that he knew regarding the circumstances surrounding his mother's death and burial. He enlisted the help of Witherspoon to find out all that he could about what had happened to his mother and where she may have been buried.

"I knew she died near Charleston, having visited that City with several matrons to afford relief to our prisoners with the British - not her son as you suppose, for at that time my two Elder brothers were no more; but two of her Nephews, William and Joseph Crawford Sons of James Crawford then deceased. I well recollect one of the matrons that went with her was Mrs. Barton. It if possible Mrs. Barton can inform me where she was buried that I can find her grave. This to me would be great satisfaction, that I might collect her bones and inter them with that of my father and brothers."

Mrs. Agnes Barton was located and interviewed by Witherspoon who then wrote back to

Jackson explaining his findings.

"I have examined Mrs. Barton on that subject, (she lives in one mile of me). She states that if it was in her power to point to the spot she would fondly do so; as well as she remembers...your Mother was buried in the suburbs of Charleston, about one mile from what was then called the Governor's Gate, which is in and about the forks of the Meeting and Kingstree Roads. Mrs. Barton states that your Mother was buried by her Husband (Mr. Barton), and two men of the name of Hood's from the Waxhaws one of them is now dead, the other is living on Beaver Creek. Mrs. B. is of the opinion that after as long a time of nearly fifty years, she would have no knowledge of the particular Spot; but she is of the Opinion that Mr. Hood can point to the place for he has frequently in conversation with Mrs. B. told her, that he has often noticed the little House where they all lived in passing to Charleston in his Wagon, and spoke of your mother etc."

The burial site of Elizabeth Hutchinson Jackson has never been located and Andrew Jackson was never able to reunite his mother, father, and brothers in the Old Waxhaw Presbyterian Cemetery. There are, however, three monuments dedicated to the Irish frontier woman and ardent patriot who gave birth to a president of the United States.

The first monument erected honoring Elizabeth Jackson was donated by members of the U.S. military stationed at Fort Moultrie; however, the original location, on King Street extension, made the monument difficult to maintain. Seven years later, in 1949, the second monument for Elizabeth was placed in the Old Waxhaw Cemetery. Then, in 1954, the Daughters of the American Revolution, unable to acquire permission to move the first (King Street) monument, dedicated their own monument to Elizabeth Jackson in downtown Charleston's Washington Park. In 1967 the original King Street monument was moved to the campus of the College of Charleston where it resides today and is, most likely, closest to the actual burial site of Elizabeth Hutchinson Jackson.

Just for the record: Andrew Jackson, the 7th President of the United States, was born in South Carolina!!!

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The mystery of Oliver Cromwell's 'queen'

5 December 2014 bbc.com

Elizabeth Cromwell (1598-1665), Her Highness the Protectoress by Robert Walker

Oliver Cromwell remains an intensely controversial figure - the subject of ongoing debate. But what was it like to be a woman at that time, and especially to be the Lady Protectress - wife of the Lord Protector himself, asks Samira Ahmed.

There's a special mystery around the life of Elizabeth Cromwell.

She was a genuine commoner and very few documents survive other than records of her marriage and death. Born in 1598 to an Essex merchant family, Elizabeth might well have been named after Elizabeth I. But she would live to become a consort like no other in British history - a queen who was not a queen.

The England of the mid-17th Century was "a country in which patriarchy was absolute in the original sense", says Laura Gowing, professor of early modern history at King's College, London. "The father is comparable to the king of the country. An orderly household should be a replica of an orderly nation. And a nation is made up of such households."

Historians think it likely that Elizabeth would have modelled her home on that ideal. She and Oliver married in St Giles Cripplegate in London in 1620 and had nine children together. Details of her £1,500 dowry survive, but we don't know if it was a love match or arranged. Still the three letters that survive between them, written 30 years later, speak of their love. "Truly my life is but half a life in your absence," she wrote to him while he was on military campaign.

Love letters

From Oliver Cromwell to Elizabeth, September 1650: *"Thou art dearer to me than any creature; let that suffice."*

From Elizabeth to Oliver, December 1650: *"Truly my life is but half a life in your absence, did not the Lord make up in Himself, which I must acknowledge to the praise of His grace."*

From Oliver to Elizabeth, May 1651: *"My Dearest, I could not satisfy myself to omit this post, although I have not much to write; yet indeed I love to write to my dear, who is very much in my heart.*

Sources: The Cromwell Association, Cromwell Museum Huntingdon

From a young MP's wife in Huntingdon and Ely to the wife of a general in the New Model Army, it wasn't until their 40s that she was to find herself elevated to the wife of the most powerful man in the country and soon housed in apartments at both Whitehall and Hampton

Court.

It was a time when "whore" was an easy and dangerous label hurled at women who were deemed to be acting above their place. Avoiding comparison with her predecessor Henrietta Maria, Charles I's queen, might have been an important thing for Cromwell's Lady Protectress.

Elizabeth Cromwell 1598-1665

Elizabeth Bourchier Cromwell

- Eldest child of Sir James Bourchier and his wife Frances
- Very little is known of Elizabeth's childhood, but her father was a prosperous businessman and landowner
- After her marriage to Oliver Cromwell, the couple lived in Huntingdon, St Ives and Ely, by the early 1650s they had moved to lodgings adjoining Whitehall Palace and in 1654 they moved into apartments in Whitehall Palace
- Hostile accounts published during her lifetime criticised her for her simple ways, and for being and feeling out of place in her elevated role

Sources: The Cromwell Association, Cromwell Museum Huntingdon

Elizabeth seems to have stayed out of state affairs. There's no evidence her relatives benefited in privileges from her connections, though, interestingly, her sole surviving letter to Oliver from December 1650, diplomatically reminds him to write to key political figures, the lord chief justice and Speaker of the House of Commons. "You cannot think the wrong you do yourself in the want of a letter, though it were but seldom."

The Cromwell Museum in Huntingdon holds a court portrait of Elizabeth from about 1653 by Robert Walker. It's not very flattering. She looks uncomfortable in a formal pose and plain dark dress, large pearl earrings and a necklace, and it's hard to read it as an anti-Royalist statement.

Italian marquetry box

As Curator John Goldsmith observes: "Jewellery was terribly fashionable. The bling in the middle of the 17th Century was just incredible. The thing about Puritans having a plain style is hard to sustain. Black was actually a fashionable colour."

An exquisite box of Italian marquetry (inlaid work) is almost the only verifiable court possession of Elizabeth's that survives, passed down unused through her family until today. The collection of rich, perfumed soaps was a gift from the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Ferdinand II, who wanted to align himself with the Protectorate. It's tempting to imagine Elizabeth being too devout to indulge in such vanity, but unable to resist keeping it.

Our image of the Protectorate - enshrined in popular culture - is of religious fundamentalism and witch-hunting. It was arguably the last period in which religion was manifestly the centre of public life.

Adultery - defined as illicit sex with a married woman - became a capital offence, although there were very few prosecutions. But because there was no censorship during the Civil War and Protectorate, Gowing says, women's voices were more prominent than ever in pamphlets and petitions on Parliament.

"They were involved in starting religious movements such as the Quakers and later the Levellers. They were often quite poor women which actually gives their religious voice more authority." It was only in the Restoration, when rights were being formalised by the centralised state, that women were formally excluded from the public arena.

Elizabeth Bourchier

Elizabeth's status was to change dramatically too, after the death of Oliver in 1658 and the end of the Protectorate under her son, Richard, months later.

In the Restoration, with the aristocracy firmly back in power, Elizabeth was crudely mocked in a satirical pamphlet cookbook The Court and Kitchen of Elizabeth, Commonly called Joan Cromwell, the Wife of the Late Usurper. She was drawn with a monkey on her shoulder to show her a crude upstart, "a hundred times fitter for a barn than a palace".

"The whole point of the curious pamphlet," says John Goldsmith, "is that she's this ordinary Fen housewife and how ridiculous [it is] that she's elevated to this position."

Elizabeth lost her home and her pension. Her husband's body was dug up and mutilated. Other men who had signed Charles I's death warrant were hanged, drawn and quartered. It must have been a terrifying time. Elizabeth had to petition Charles II to be allowed to leave London, denying rumours that she had stolen any royal jewels. Her low profile in the Protectorate court may have saved her life.

She was to live out her widowhood with her married daughter's family at Northborough Manor in Northamptonshire, dying in painful illness in 1665, seven years after Oliver.

Oliver Cromwell 1599-1658

- Married Elizabeth Bourchier in 1620, with whom he had nine children
- Raised an army in 1642 in support of parliament against Charles I during English Civil War and was instrumental in trial and execution of Charles I
- Became Lord Protector of England in 1653, later refused to be king
- Died at home in Whitehall in 1658 and was exhumed and posthumously "executed" in 1661

Oliver Cromwell bust

Over the centuries books, paintings and later films have either ignored Elizabeth (she barely appears in the 1970 Richard Harris film Cromwell) or imposed their own contemporary fantasies - notably the sentimental 19th Century painting by William Fisk which portrays her kneeling with her children begging Oliver to spare the life of Charles I.

What would Elizabeth tell us? Her kitchen in Ely where she lived her early married life is now a museum.

Her modest grave in Northborough's village church has no inscription, possibly because it was desecrated. The church warden wonders if Oliver's decapitated body might have been quietly brought and buried with her.

We may never know. But it adds to the haunting mystery about a loyal wife and a witness to extraordinary times.

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Ewww! Seattle gum wall a top germy attraction

Jun 13, 2009
Jun 13, 2009

komonews.com

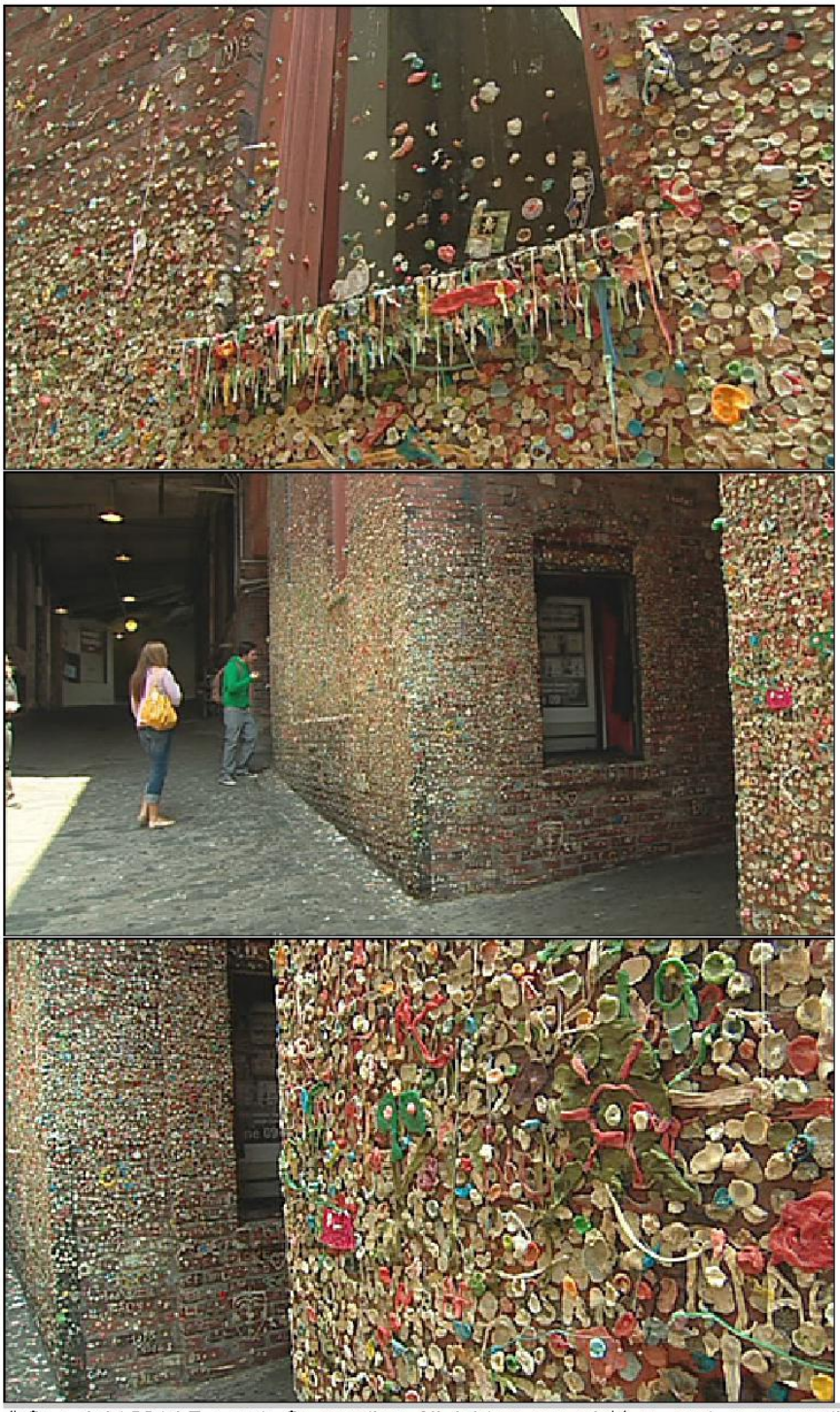
SEATTLE -- A Seattle landmark has landed on a dubious list as one of the world's top five germiest attractions.

The 'gum wall' outside the Market Theater at Pike Place Market comes in at number two on the list released by TripAdvisor.

Starting in the 1990s, people would stick their gum on the wall as they waited for tickets.

The wall was scraped clean twice, but people couldn't seem to stop sticking their gum up and down the wall, and now it's a tourist attraction.

Ireland's Blarney Stone, which is kissed by up to 400,000 visitors each year, topped the list of unsanitary vacation stops.



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Family lived with man's dead body for six months as they prayed for resurrection

Stephen Marr for Metro.co.uk Tuesday 2 Dec 2014 12:26 pm
http://metro.co.uk/2014/12/02/family-lived-with-mans-dead-body-for-six-months-as-they-prayed-for-resurrection-4970565/

This is a story about one family's unshakable faith in the Lord, and how it

lead to a woman and her children living with a dead body for six months. The Wald family was a law-abiding, God-fearing, religion-preaching family in Hamilton, Canada.

Peter Wald and his wife Kaling had six children, and they lived in a modest home in the appropriately named Saint Matthews Avenue.

The family drove around town in a van covered in religious messages – as was their home – and they even scratched crosses on the van's headlights so it would beam the glorious symbol on the road in front of them.

They handed out food to the homeless and would perform little plays and skits – religiously themed, of course – in the backyard of their home for homeless folk in the neighbourhood.

Kaling Wald padlocked the upstairs bedroom door, and sealed the window, door and all air vents with duct tape (Picture: Google Maps)

But the Lord, in his infinite wisdom, decided to afflict 52-year-old Peter with diabetes. Thinking that perhaps it was one of God's tests, Peter refused to get medical treatment – believing instead that the Yahwey would cure him.

Eventually Peter fell into a coma and died in the family home around March 20 last year. Instead of calling the authorities and beginning funeral arrangements, Kaling and five of the six children living in the house decided that they would pray for Peter's resurrection.

And prayed they did – hard!

Kaling covered Peter's body with two blankets, shut the bedroom door and padlocked it. She sealed with window, door, and all vents with duct tape – and then went downstairs to await his inevitable rise from the dead.

It's not the first time a person has lived with a dead relative upstairs (Picture: Universal Studios)

Neighbours had asked Kaling about Peter's whereabouts but she simply replied that he was 'in God's hands'.

On September 17, almost six months later, the local sheriff visited the house to serve an eviction notice – they had defaulted on mortgage payments.

The Walds knew they were going to be evicted, and had already packed their belongings – including Peter's – when the sheriff arrived.

Court reports do not record the sheriff's reaction when Kaling unlocked the padlock and cracked open the upstairs bedroom door to reveal the still-unresurrected Peter – but it was undoubtedly one of the all-time most

horrified facial expressions.

Probably worse than that.

Peter was badly decomposed – and the neighbourhood's rats had not been dissuaded by a bit of duct tape and a couple of blankets. If Peter was coming back now, he would be coming back in a bad way.

On Monday, 50-year-old Kaling pleaded guilty to failing to notify police or the coroner that her husband had died due to an illness that was not being treated by a doctor. It's the first known conviction of its kind in Canada. She was given 18 months of probation and ordered to seek counselling over the 'public health' implications of the incident

Kaling, who has moved her family to Fort Erie, Canada, reassuringly told a reporter for the Hamilton Spectator after her court case: 'It was unusual, yes. It was certainly not normal. And we won't do that again… laws exist and we know that now.'

Navy Vice Adm. Tim Giardina in a Nov. 11, 2011, photo.

Deputy chief at StratCom suspended

Fake poker chips - Timothy Giardina

A photo from the investigation shows the fake $500 poker chips confiscated from Giardina at the Horseshoe Casino in Council Bluffs.

WASHINGTON (AP) — The admiral fired last year as No. 2 commander of U.S. nuclear forces may have made his own counterfeit $500 poker chips with paint and stickers to feed a gambling habit that eventually saw him banned from an entire network of casinos, according to a criminal investigative report obtained by The Associated Press.

Although Rear Adm. Timothy M. Giardina's removal as deputy commander at U.S. Strategic Command at Offutt Air Force Base was announced earlier this year, evidence of his possible role in manufacturing the counterfeit chips has not previously been revealed. Investigators said they found his DNA on the underside of an adhesive sticker used to alter genuine $1 poker chips to make them look like $500 chips.

Nor had the Navy disclosed how extensively he gambled.

The case is among numerous embarrassing setbacks for the nuclear force. Disciplinary problems, security flaws, weak morale and leadership lapses documented by The Associated Press over the past two years prompted Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel on Nov. 14 to announce top-to-bottom changes in how the nuclear force is managed that will cost up to $10 billion.

The records obtained by the AP under the Freedom of Information Act show Giardina was a habitual poker player, spending a total of 1,096 hours or an average of 15 hours per week at the tables at the Horseshoe casino in Council Bluffs in the 18 months before being caught using three phony chips in June 2013.

He was such a familiar figure at the casino that some there knew him as "Navy Tim." But they may not have known he was a three-star admiral and second-in-charge at Strategic Command, the military's nuclear war-fighting headquarters. Strategic Command also plays key roles in missile defense, cyberdefense, space operations and other functions.

A career submarine officer, Giardina is a 1979 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy.

Such was Giardina's affection for poker that even after he was caught he "continued to come

in and gamble on a regular basis" at Harrah's casino, also located in Council Bluffs, according to an account by an Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation agent that was turned over to the Naval Criminal Investigative Service after NCIS took over the case in August 2013.

On July 18 Giardina was banned from both the Horseshoe and Harrah's for 90 days, but he returned at least twice to play poker at the Horseshoe before the ban expired. The second time, in October, he was given a lifetime ban from all gambling establishments run by the Horseshoe's owner, Caesar's Entertainment Corp.

The new report included Giardina's remarks to a casino security agent about the polygraphs given at Strategic Command to officers holding security clearances.

"(What) they're really trying to do is find out if you got, you know, if you're having sex with animals or something really crazy or you've got this wild life that you could be blackmailed into giving military secrets out," he was quoted as saying.

At Strategic Command, Giardina was privy to highly sensitive national security secrets. Legal gambling by Strategic Command officers with security clearances is not prohibited or limited by policy, although if they incur excessive debt they are required to report it, according to the command's chief spokeswoman, Navy Capt. Pamela Kunze.

Six days after he received the lifetime Caesar's ban, Giardina was kicked out of the Hollywood Casino at Kansas Speedway in Kansas City, Kansas, according to the NCIS records that gave no reason for that expulsion. That casino is not a Caesar's property.

The state investigator's report also said a review of surveillance footage revealed "odd behaviors" by Giardina at the Horseshoe.

"Giardina was observed taking cigarette butts out of public ash trays and smoking them," it said.

Giardina, who remains on the Navy payroll as a staff officer in Washington, was never charged with counterfeiting. Instead he was found guilty in May 2014 of two counts of conduct unbecoming an officer lying to an investigator and passing fake gambling chips. He was given a written reprimand and ordered to forfeit $4,000 in pay.

The Navy chose not to pursue a court martial because they were uncertain they could get a conviction with the evidence they had, officials said.

In a February interview, he told The World-Herald that he was upset that the Naval Criminal Investigative Service was taking so long to investigate the case.

In early September 2013 Giardina was quietly suspended from his post at Strategic Command, which he had assumed in December 2011. One month later he was fired and reduced in rank from three-star to two-star admiral.

Giardina did not respond to an AP email request Friday for comment on the investigation report. In May, after the Navy announced his punishment, Giardina told the AP he had no

comment.

NCIS denied AP's original request for the investigation records but released them this month after granting an AP appeal.

The case against Giardina opened in the wee hours of June 16, 2013, when an Iowa Division of Criminal Investigation agent responded to calls from the Horseshoe reporting the discovery of three counterfeit $500 poker chips. Casino surveillance video showed Giardina had played them. Interviewed two days later, Giardina admitted using them but claimed to be an innocent victim.

Giardina said he had purchased $2,000 in chips, including three $500 chips, from a person in a casino bathroom transaction for $1,975 in cash. He said he could not identify the person.

In his interview with casino security on June 18, Giardina said, "I guarantee you I did not do anything wrong," according to a casino transcript. Trying to pass off $1,500 in counterfeit chips is "not something that even would tempt me," he said, adding, "It's not worth risking your whole career over."

Later, Giardina told the Pottawattamie County attorney in a letter that he misled investigators.

"During the interview I was not forthright in my response about how I came into the possession of the chips in question," he wrote, according to an NCIS affidavit.

The Army lab that tested the chips and the DNA concluded that the center section of a genuine $500 chip had been photocopied or scanned and then printed onto adhesive stickers. The stickers were then applied to the front and back of genuine $1 chips to make them appear to be real $500 chips. One of the problems, however, was that the adhesive stickers covered up a security feature embedded in the chips and visible only with ultraviolet light.

The counterfeiter also apparently hand painted the $1 chips to try to simulate the color scheme of a genuine $500 chip. Security officials were able to scratch off the paint.

The Army lab that tested the chips confirmed in January 2014 that Giardina's DNA was a match for the DNA found on the adhesive sticker used to cover the $1 marking on the center inlay of a legitimate chip.

Six days later Giardina's lawyer notified NCIS that the admiral would not participate in an NCIS interview.

Posted in Metro, Military, Nebraska on *Saturday, November 22, 2014 8:49 am. Updated: 3:59 pm.*

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Cover Page

Page 1 of 1

FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY
NAVAL CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIVE SERVICES
RECORDS MANAGEMENT DIVISION
LAW ENFORCEMENT RECORDS

Name: GIARDINA TIMOTHY MICHAEL

AKA:

Social Security Number: [redacted] Context: Subject

Date of Birth: [redacted] State of Birth: Country of Birth: US - United States of America

Case Number: 18/UL13CNGL01236GNA Dossier:

DCII INDEX CODE:	RECORD SERIES #:	Date Closed:
K - 50 Years	5500Feb1/26	05/05/2014

RECORD SERIES (FILE PLAN)

Criminal Investigative Reports

Comments:

No Polygraph Examination Conducted	No Sexual Offender Registry Completed
No Finger Prints Submitted to Code 23C2	No Final Disposition Report to FBI

OS: _____ / _____

☐ Closed Status ☐ Dup Title ☐ Dup CDN

14/8982

certify that the ... issued and is complete.

16 May 14 GSA

DATE

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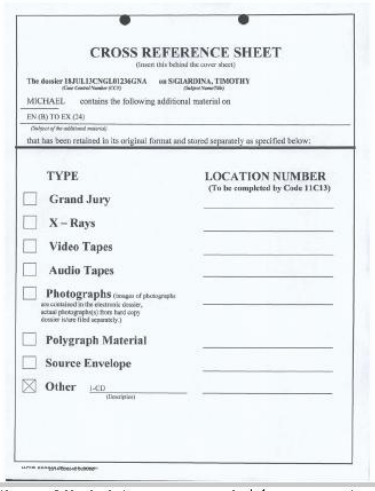
5/13/2014



CROSS REFERENCE SHEET
(Insert this behind the cover sheet)

The dossier 18JUL13CNGL01236GNA on SGIARDINA, TIMOTHY
(Case Control Number (CCI)) (Subject Name/Title)

MICHAEL contains the following additional material on

EN (B) TO EX (24)
(Subject of the additional material)

that has been retained in its original format and stored separately as specified below:

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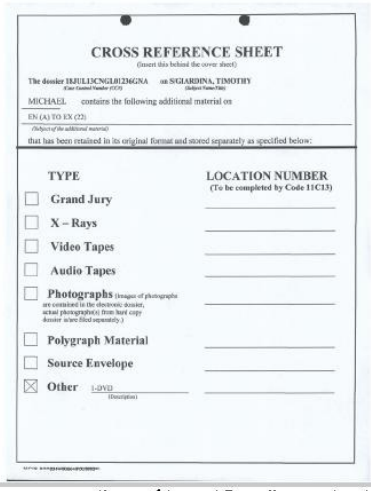
☐ X – Rays	
☐ Video Tapes	
☐ Audio Tapes	
☐ Photographs (images of photographs are contained in the electronic dossier, actual photographs(s) from hard copy dossier is/are filed separately.)	
☐ Polygraph Material	
☐ Source Envelope	
☒ Other 1-CD (Description)	



CROSS REFERENCE SHEET
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The dossier 18JUL13CNGL01236GNA on SGIARDINA, TIMOTHY
(Case Control Number (CCI)) (Subject Name/Title)

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(Subject of the additional material)

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☐ Polygraph Material	
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☒ Other 1-DVD (Description)	

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Fishermen Find Human Head —Inside Shark

(Newser) – The shark weighed some 650 pounds, but it's what was inside that was disturbingly memorable: a human head and leg. Fishermen in the Philippines caught the tiger shark last month, and when they opened it, they discovered the human remains, UPI reports. The flesh was only partly digested. "It was so disgusting. We can't bear the awful smell," one fisherman tells Minda News. They threw the remains, as well as most of the shark, back in the water, keeping only the animal's head and fins. "We feared that the human remains may bring bad luck to us," the fisherman says.

The group left the shark's jaw in the sun to dry the next day, prompting concern from one of their wives: "I don't want the sight of that jaw, knowing that the shark had eaten a human being. Who knows, the victim's spirit might visit us," she says. The jaw had a diameter of 17 inches, leading one outside expert to suggest it could have been far bigger than the fishermen guessed: He figures it could have weighed more like 1,300 pounds, the Inquisitr reports. Locals have one guess as to how a human might have ended up inside the shark. A ferry sank in the area in September, and two passengers have never been found. (Another recent shark incident ended better for the humans: A man punched a shark to save his friend.)

Fisherman found human remains inside a huge shark.

DaBaron
7 hours, 32 minutes ago

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Florida Agrees That Satanists Must Have Equal Representation In Capitol

io9.com

Written by Cheryl Eddy

The Satanic Temple scored a free-speech victory in its quest for equal representation among the Florida state capitol building's religious-themed holiday displays.

The Satanic Temple — not to be confused with the Church of Satan, with which TST is not affiliated — describes its mission as "facilitating the communication and mobilization of politically aware Satanists, secularists, and advocates for individual liberty," as well as "to encourage benevolence and empathy among all people. In addition, we embrace practical common sense and justice. As an organized religion, we feel it is our function to actively provide outreach, to lead by example, and to participate in public affairs wheresoever the issues might benefit from rational, Satanic insights."

The group's causes are quite progressive; current campaigns advocate for women's reproductive health rights and same-sex marriage, among other causes. But the media-savvy organization (check out the merch) gets the most attention for its freedom-of-religion efforts, like that time they argued that if a statue of the Ten Commandments could be displayed in the Oklahoma State Capitol, it was only fair that a statue of Baphomet (along with any other religious representation that anyone cared to donate) be allowed to hang out, too.

It's in this spirit that TST took on Florida's government, which has a seemingly open-door policy on religious displays during the holidays.

According to Slate, in 2013 the state "allowed Christians, Jews, secular humanists, atheists, and Pastafarians [i.e., Flying Spaghetti Monster devotees] to construct testaments to their faith. [They also allowed a Festivus pole made of beer cans.] But Florida forbade the Satanic Temple from placing its own display in the capitol, labeling it 'grossly offensive.' So this year, the temple reapplied, with some additional legal backing: Americans United for the Separation of Church and State threatened to sue Florida for violating the temple's free speech rights if the state refused to permit its display."

Needless to say, Florida blinked, and the Satanic Temple's display (described as "an angel falling into a pit of fire") will take its place under the rotunda December 22-29. Horns up for the First Amendment.

Florida man buys foreclosed home, finds body inside

Fort Myers News-Press firstcoastnews.com

635508597220320283-body-inside

A body was found today at this home on SE 19th Lane in Cape Coral. A death investigation is being conducted.(Photo: Jack Hardman/News-Press.com)

The Cape Coral house on SE 19th Lane had rusted iron gates on each window and every entrance. Four dead-bolts were chained at the front door.

Longtime Cape Coral resident William Wilson acquired the worn light pink house at auction Tuesday for $96,000.

He arrived the next morning to evaluate his purchase, trim the hedges and mow the lawn. What he found inside was a body.

"The inside was a mess," Wilson said. "It looked like (someone) was packing to move. There were a lot of boxes, some pictures of children on the fridge."

Authorities told him the most recent piece of mail was from November of 2011 and unpaid taxes went back three years. The corpse was on the floor of the master bedroom next to the bed. Longtime neighbors say an older woman from Miami last lived at the home with her sister, but they hadn't seen or heard from her for several years.

Some thought she moved, others said she just disappeared. Outside, the grass grew long and the community speculated. Inside, Wilson said all that remained were bones, skin and the smell of remains. In the living room was a bird cage and piles of feces.

"You couldn't tell who it was," Wilson said. "You couldn't tell if it was a male or a female ... it's disappointing and a sad thing that nobody cared enough to check."

The Cape Coral Police Department responded to the scene Wednesday afternoon to conduct a death investigation. Officers cordoned the property with yellow caution tape. At dusk, one officer remained parked out front.

"It's sad about the whole thing," said Bill Harrigan, who lives across the street. "Nobody ever checked on her."

Wednesday night, residents stood outside their homes and watched law enforcement come and go along the two-lane road.

"I didn't know them," said Liz Palma, 55, of Cape Coral. "It's very strange, all those bars on the house. I never smelled anything ... that's just freaky. I'm freaked out."

Next-door neighbor Gary Oben Jr., 30, said he used to park his van in the driveway because no one was ever around. The woman was nice, but reclusive and didn't speak much English. He saw her a handful of times in a decade. She got the mail and she watered the lawn and liked his dogs.

The house was built in 2007 and previously owned by Carmen Garcia-Viso.

"I had a hunch," Oben said. "Either it was a grow house or there was a dead lady in there."

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Flying saucer uses sinister ‘mind control’ ray on Manchester man

Rob Waugh for Metro.co.uk
Monday 17 Nov 2014 2:35 pm
http://metro.co.uk/2014/11/17/flying-saucer-uses-sinister-mind-control-ray-on-manchester-man-4951595/

To the untrained eye, this object might look like a cloud or a piece of fluff on the camera lens – but a Manchester craftsman experienced first-hand the hi-tech powers of what he believes to be a UFO, visiting from another world.

Thankfully, these powers did not involve bodily invasion with foot-long probes (as is so often the case).

Instead, John Hindley, 35, felt a ‘pulling sensation’ that jerked him across the room to take a picture of a strange object flying over the Pennines, two miles away.

Hindley said: ‘I just got up and I felt this pull to take a picture out the window there and then. I just got up from the sofa and something drew me to the window. I took the picture not realising what it was.’

The mysterious oval had lights emanating from it, and remained there for 30 minutes.

But it had not finished using its mysterious powers on the luckless craftsman.

Hindley said: 'Two days after I remembered feeling I had. It was like that pull I had had before. Normally when you take a photo there is no emotion so I remembered that feeling I had and so I thought I would look at the photo. It had it again with I looked at the photo.

'It was like magnetic pull – a lunar pull. I felt the same pull at when I took the picture.'

Once the alien force had compelled him to zoom in, he saw it! A UFO! Or possibly a piece of fluff.

Hindley said: 'I am a rational man. I have never felt that feeling before. With the feeling I had and what it looks like, I don't think it was a Chinook helicopter.'

'I definitely think it could have been a UFO. I think people more people are realising that we are not the only people floating around the vicinity.'

'I mean the photo shows the lights shining through the clouds. I really don't think it is a reflection – look at the saucer shaped object and the lights and the two lines coming out of the bottom.'

'Fake forgeries' to be auctioned

3 November 2014 bbc.com

Last updated at 06:24 ET

Monet's In the Woods at Giverny

The real deal: Monet's In the Woods at Giverny has been forged again and again

A New Zealand auction house has decided to put two "fake forgeries" under the hammer, it's been reported.

The oil paintings, imitations of Claude Monet's At Giverny and In the Woods at Giverny, were initially thought to be the work of renowned forger Elmyr de Hory. But they actually turned out to be "fake fakes", the New Zealand Herald website reports. Auckland auction house Cordy's was contacted last month by a de Hory expert, Mark Forgy, who said they had really been painted by London bookmaker Ken Talbot. Both paintings were promptly removed from sale.

The idea of someone faking de Hory's own forgeries "came up only one time" in conversation with the artist, Mr Forgy says. "We both contemplated that for a moment and then laughed at the far-fetched notion." The two paintings are now being advertised as "Fakes of fake Claude Monet", the website reports. "We were astonished to find that there was a market in faking faker's art works," says auctioneer Andrew Grigg. He says they will now alert others in the business to be aware of the con.

Hungarian-born Elmyr De Hory was considered a master forger, after reportedly selling more than 1,000 fake pieces to galleries and collectors around the world, including imitation Monet, Picasso, and Cezanne paintings

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For other meanings, see fougasse (disambiguation).

A **fougasse** // is an improvised mine constructed by making a hollow in the ground or rock and filling it with explosives (originally, black powder) and projectiles. Fougasse was well known to military engineers by the mid-eighteenth century but was also referred to by Vauban in the seventeenth century and was used by Zimmermann at Augsburg in the sixteenth century. This technique was used in several European wars, the American Revolution, and the American Civil War. The term is still used to describe such devices.

- 1 Firing
- 2 Types
  - 2.1 Stone
  - 2.2 Shell
  - 2.3 Flame
- 3 See also
- 4 Notes
- 5 References
- 6 External links

Firing[edit]

The normal method of firing was to use a burning torch or slow match to ignite a *saucisson* (French for "big sausage", a cloth or leather tube waterproofed with pitch and filled with black powder) leading to the main charge. This had numerous disadvantages; the firer was obvious to the attacking enemy, and had to race to get clear after lighting the fuse. The black powder was also very susceptible to moisture, and might not work at all. In 1573 Samuel Zimmermann devised an improved method which incorporated a snaphance (or later, flintlock mechanism) into the charge and connected its trigger to the surface with a wire. This was more resistant to moisture, better concealed, and enabled the firer to be further away. It also enabled the fougasse to be tripwire activated, turning it into an anti-personnel fragmentation mine.

In a letter to his sister, Colonel Hugh Robert Hibbert described such a weapon employed during the Crimean War:

> These wretched Russians have discovered a new system of annoyance which would be well worthy of invention by Franky [their brother] and which consists of a series of small mines or barrels of gunpowder let into the ground between our works and theirs, and a little tin tube running along the ground a few inches above it, two or three feet long, which tube is filled with some composition which explodes immediately on being touched, so that any unfortunate meandering along the grass without knowing why, suddenly finds himself going up in the air like a squib with his legs and arms flying in different directions. We have had many men blown up by these things and the grass being so long one cannot see

> the tube at all. The technical name is "Fougasse". Franky will know what they are I daresay. The ground between our old trenches, and the Russian ones that we took the other day is full of them. At night you hear a sudden explosion and you know that some wretched fellow has been crossing from one trench to another, on private speculation to see what he could get, has trod on the tube and been blown up. I often think how the Russians must laugh when they hear these things going up at night in all directions, they must know well what it is.[1]

Types[edit]

There are several variants according to the material projected by the explosion.

Stone[edit]

The most common type in early use was the **stone fougasse**, which was simply filled with large rocks, bricks, etc. When fired, it would scatter a hail of fast-moving stones across the area to its front. Large stone fougasses might hold several tons of rubble and as much as a hundredweight of powder.

Shell[edit]

The **shell fougasse** was loaded with early black powder mortar shells (essentially a large version of an early black powder hand grenade) or incendiary "carcasses". When fired, the powder charge would throw out the shells and ignite their fuses, so the projectiles would be scattered across the target area and then begin exploding, filling the area with fragmentation or flame from all directions in an effect similar to a cluster bomb.

Flame[edit]

Main article: Flame fougasse

A **flame fougasse** was a similar weapon in which the projectile was a flammable liquid, typically a mixture of petrol (gasoline) and oil. The flame fougasse was developed by the British Petroleum Warfare Department in response to the threat of German invasion during World War II.[2]

In Britain, during WWII, the flame fougasse was usually constructed from a 40-gallon drum dug into the roadside and camouflaged. It would be placed at a location such as a corner, steep incline or roadblock where vehicles would be obliged to slow down. Ammonal provided the propellant charge which, when triggered, caused the weapon to shoot a flame 10 feet (3.0 m) wide and 30 yards (27 m) long. Initially a mixture of 40% petrol and 60% gas oil was used; this was later replaced by an adhesive gel of tar, lime and petrol known as 5B.[3]

The November 1944 issue of the US War Department Intelligence Bulletin refers to 'Fougasse flame throwers' used in the Russian defence at Stalingrad being the basis of a German version found in Italy that were buried with a fixed direction discharge tube and integrated with conventional landmines and barbed wire in defense works. The German weapon, the Abwehrflammenwerfer 42 had an 8 gallon fuel tank and the seven in the

installation were wired back to a control point and could be fired individually or together.[4]

The flame fougasse has remained in army field manuals as a battlefield expedient. Such expedients are constructed from available fuel containers combined with standard explosive charges or hand grenades triggered electrically or by lengths of detonating cord. Some designs use lengths of detonating cord or blasting caps to rupture the fuel container as well as detonate the main charge.[5] Weapons of this sort were widely used in the Korean and Vietnam wars as well as other conflicts.

See also[edit]

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5. **Jump up ^** FM 20-33, 1967, chapter 6.

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Texas To Execute Inmate With Schizophrenia

The Huffington Post | By Andres Jauregui huffingtonpost.com

Execution Of Scott Panetti, Inmate With Schizophrenia, 'Would Cross A Moral Line': Lawyer

Posted: 11/13/2014 1:39 pm EST Updated: 11/13/2014 1:59 pm EST

Supporters of a mentally ill Texas man on death row are petitioning state officials to commute his sentence to life in prison.

Scott Panetti, 56, rejected a plea deal in the 1992 double-murder of his in-laws, and was allowed to represent himself at trial, despite the state's knowledge of his schizophrenia, his lawyers said.

Panetti is scheduled to die by lethal injection Dec. 3.

Greg Wiercioch, one of Panetti's lawyers, said the execution "would cross a moral line," Courthouse News reported.

Wiercioch and his other lawyers filed a clemency petition Nov. 12 asking officials to stop the execution. The letter was signed by former Texas Gov. Mark White, the American Bar Association, and a host of mental health professionals and religious leaders.

"We come together from across the partisan and ideological divide and are united in our belief that, irrespective of whether we support or oppose the death penalty, this is not an appropriate case for execution," said the letter, which was addressed to Texas Gov. Rick Perry and the state board of pardons and parole.

Panetti, who was diagnosed with schizophrenia in 1978, claimed that his alter ego, "Sarge," killed his wife's parents, then kidnapped his spouse and daughter at gunpoint and held them hostage in a cabin. They were later released unharmed.

Panetti's lawyers said that the violent spree was triggered by a "psychotic break," which also led the man to reject a plea deal for life in prison and represent himself at trial.

During the trial, he donned a purple cowboy costume and called witnesses such as the John F. Kennedy, the Pope, and Jesus Christ. In 1995, Panetti was convicted of capital murder in the shooting deaths of his in-laws.

Panetti's case went before the Supreme Court in 2007. In a 5-4 ruling, the court found Panetti had insufficient understanding of why he was being put to death, and ordered a re-evaluation. But after his case went to court again, the state courts decided that Panetti was exaggerating his illness and reinstated the death penalty.

His lawyers said Panetti maintains the delusion that Satan is orchestrating his execution by way of the state of Texas, in order to prevent him from preaching the gospel to other inmates

on death row.

"I thought to myself, 'My God. How in the world can our legal system allow an insane man to defend himself? How can this be just?'" F.E. Seale, a psychiatrist who examined Panetti several times, said in court, according to the Journal Sentinel. "I not only thought that Scott was incompetent but that it was not moral to have him stand trial."

Texas has executed 10 inmates in 2014, and has another nine scheduled for next year.

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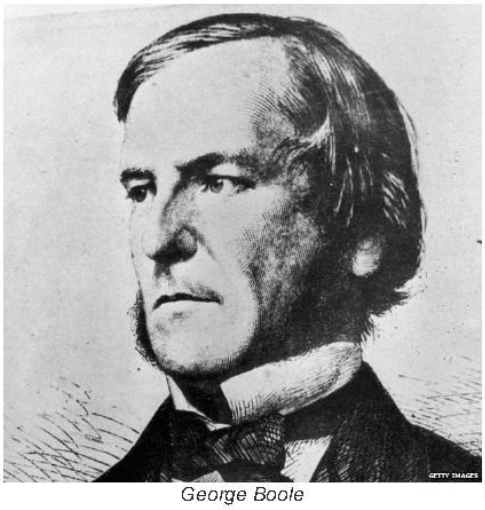
George Boole and the AND OR NOT gates

8 December 2014 bbc.com



George Boole

George AND Boole

Mathematician George Boole died 150 years ago. Boolean logic, the system he invented, is still used in modern computer programming, writes Chris Stokel-Walker.

Boole walked two miles to the lecture hall where he was due to give a lecture to students in 1864. But it was raining, and he became ill, dying of pleural effusion - liquid around the lungs - on December 8, 1864. He was 49.

In the last 17 years of his life he had established the concept of algebraic logic in mathematics, and simplified the world down to basic statements with either a yes or no answer, for which he used binary arithmetic. "The respective interpretations of the symbols 0 and 1 in the system of logic are Nothing and Universe," he said. It was a concept he first introduced in 1847, and expanded on in 1854. But even now, 150 years after his death, it's used in computer programmes.

"Almost every other line of a computer programme has a Boolean statement in it," says Michael Dunn of Gospelware, an iOS and Android developer. "It's not something you think about; it's such an integral part of programming."

Boole used the concept of gates, or questions, probing an individual statement - the answer of which is a Boolean yes or no. The most basic three gates are AND, OR or NOT statements. It's possible to deploy Boolean logic using algebra. Statement A ("Today is Monday") is true. Statement B ("It's currently sunny") is also true. Using AND, OR or NOT gates, you can create more complicated statements explaining both the date and weather.

Boolean logic is all around us, in the code behind the games we play, the apps we use, and the software we work with on a day-to-day basis. The basic level of commands given to computers - the building blocks of how these things work - are based on Boole's logic. "You can't get away from the term Boolean if you're a programmer today," Dunn notes.

It's also under the hood of our search engines. When you search for "Miley Cyrus" there's an implied Boolean use of the AND command to combine the two words. In the early days of search, the AND, OR and NOT commands were commonly used to winnow down search results. Today advances in search technology mean many searches can be carried out using more natural language. But Google still allows its users to type in OR (to single out Wimbledon winners from specific years, for example), or to use a minus sign to signify NOT (to remove all mentions of trainers from a search for the ancient goddess of victory, Nike).

Boole himself had a notion of the impact of his logic could have. He told a friend in 1851 that Boolean logic could be "the most valuable if not the only valuable contribution that I have made or am likely to make to Science and the thing by which I would desire if at all to be remembered hereafter".

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The Bridge at Dead Man's Curve on Clinton Road

Probably the most common ghost story that we hear about Clinton Road is that of a dead young boy who hangs out under a bridge and returns coins to you after you throw them in the water. As far as we know, this tale is unique to Clinton Road, but it is difficult to say when or how this story began.

On a recent visit to the bridge at Dead Man's Curve we were surprised and delighted to see just how many people had recently stopped by to test the validity of the legend of the Ghost Boy of Clinton Road. As we peered over the gaurdrail and down into the tea colored water of the stream we could clearly see dozens of coins resting on the bottom among the stones of the creekbed. There is no way of knowing how many appearances the Ghost Boy made when summoned by the coin tossers.

Look closely and you will see coins on the creek bed which were thrown to summon the Ghost Boy.

It should be noted that there is more than one bridge located on Clinton Road, and nobody really knows for sure which one the Ghost Boy supposedly hangs out beneath. A second bridge is located several miles to the south of Dead Man's Curve, just above the old stone iron furnace. This bridge stradles a stoney cleft through which a waterfall crashes mightily. If the Ghost Boy's spirit haunts this bridge then his trip up to return thrown coins would certainly be a much more challenging task––if he was alive, that is.

Although he is the most talked about apparition to haunt Clinton Road, he is by no means the soul spirit to spook this street.

Small Change

If you ever decide to travel down Clinton Road at midnight, stop at the bridge by dead man's

Trying to figure out why vultures would be flying around in the middle of nowhere, he walked farther into the woods. He saw a large bag, so he walked over to it and started to open it. He saw a human head in it. This shook him up a little, so he ran back to the road, and started biking out to get a cop. He flagged a passing car, who then notified the cops. This started a long string of events in the police investigation, involving a mob rub-out, leading to a murder arrest. *–Tim*

Bodybag on Clinton Road

I've had many weird experiences up on Clinton Road. I was coming home one night with a friend, and we approached the curve located in the middle of Clinton Rd. There, laying in the road was someone in a bodybag. The blood could be seen on the bag. I put the car in reverse, and went back the way I came. We called the police. They found nothing, no blood, no body, no trace of anyone. *–Bob E.*

Clinton Road NOT A Joke

I've been a resident of West Milford for practically my entire life. I have a lot of eyewitness info on Clinton Road. The first and most important fact is that this road is NOT a joke.

Many of the stories you hear are not rumors, in fact most of them are true. However, every story does have exaggerations. The facts are that many dismembered bodies are found in the woods off of Clinton Road. Cross Castle did exist, and if you go to the wrong place, you will be chased.

The KKK does have gatherings there, and there is Satan worship. The strange animals are there, and though no one knows what they are, many people have a theory that some of the survivors from Jungle Habitat have interbred. So all in all, if your going to check out Clinton Road be careful, and be smart or else you will be the next tale. *–Anonymous*

Clinton Road sign

The Clinton Road Cop

Wow was this place scary. I was there a few times before and it wasn't that bad – except when we got a flat in the center of the ten mile road. When the cop asked what we were doing we lied. We asked why he was on such a scary road. His reply was "I'm only out here because I have a gun." *–Anonymous*

This Internet story is only an excerpt of the information we have published on this subject. For the full story we suggest you refer to past issues of Weird NJ Magazine. To keep up to date on this story and all the other weird goings on in the state subscribe to Weird NJ and we'll deliver it to your door. If your local book seller, newsstand or convenience store doesn't carry Weird NJ, just tell them to call us toll free at 1-866-WEIRDNJ and we'll be happy to stock your favorite store for you. if you'd like to purchase our special issue "Tales

From Clinton Road," please do. But we warned you!

We are very proud to announce the release of Weird NJ's very first true eBook, "Home State Hauntings: True Stories of Ghostly Places in New Jersey" for
your iPad, Kindle and Nook tablets.

This entry was posted in Garden State Ghosts, Roads Less Traveled, Stories and tagged Clinton Road, Dead Man's Curve, Ghost Boy, Haunted Bridge, Hell Hounds, West Milford. Bookmark the permalink.

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curve. As the story goes if you sit on that bridge and throw pennies into the river, the ghost of a young boy will throw them back to you. *–Anonymous*

…We found the bridge on Clinton Road that was said to have started the rumor. Years before any of us heard about the road, a boy was challenged by his friends to stand on the bridge as they drove to Route 23 and back. Unfortunately by the time the friends returned from driving to the highway, they found their friend dead. There is a bridge painted as a memorial to him. *–Anonymous*

Another rumor of Clinton Road is that if you throw a penny into the lake, the next morning the penny will be on the road. Supposedly there was a kid that drowned there trying to get a ball or something and the kid is supposed to appear at night and pick up the penny and put it on the ground. *–Gregory MC.*

My friends and I decided to find out for ourselves what is true and what is not. We went to the bridge and threw a quarter off. Not but a minute later you hear the bloop, as if you dropped the quarter in again. The water filled with ripples and a child's reflection appeared. I flew back to the car. That scared all of us. *–Dina, West Milford*

Ghost Boy Pushes You in the Lake

I went up to Clinton Road with two friends of mine. The really weird legend is that of the little boy. The story I heard was that a little boy was hit by a car and killed on the bridge when he went to pick up a quarter he saw on the ground. The legend is that if you get out of your car and stand on the bridge you will see a quarter drop, and if you bend down to pick it up the little boy will push you into the lake to save you from being hit by the car. *–Anonymous*

Wheelchair in the Lake

The Clinton Ghost Kid Doesn't Want Your Quarters

Yesterday at 8pm me and my friend Mike were going to a movie at the drive-in. We took Clinton Road. We stopped on the bridge and he told me all the stories about the boy being killed and all, so I threw a quarter off the edge and we drove away. On the way home at 11:30 we passed over the bridge and stopped because Mike wanted to point out the kid's name on the side of the bridge. Just when he said the kid's name a quarter or something metal was thrown hard against the window of the car. We were shocked for a minute but then we drove away. I am not going on that road for a long time. *–Anonymous*

Clinton Road – A Dark Ride

There is one road in particular that we have heard more rumors and tall tales about than any other thoroughfare in the state by far – Clinton Road in West Milford (Passaic County). What is it about this road? Why are there so many strange and frightening stories told about this particular byway? Is it the isolation of Clinton Road that makes it such a ripe candidate for modern mythology? And if this is the case, why are these stories told of Clinton Road, and

not its comparably deserted neighboring roads like Paradise Road and Union Valley?

Clinton Road Pavement

Clinton Road just seems to strike terror into the hearts of those who travel it. But why is Clinton Road so much richer in lore than any other road in New Jersey? Yes, it is a long and lonely stretch of poorly paved asphalt, fraught with perilous curves. True, it runs through a vast expanse of seemingly impenetrable wilderness. And without a doubt, it is a very dark lonely trip when traveled alone on a moonless night, when your only companions are the mysterious sounds of the forest which seem to surround you. Yet there are hundreds of other rural roads in the state which are even more desolate, isolated and less well-traveled than Clinton Road, some of them without a single creepy story to claim as their own. Why?

There are many reasons to visit Clinton Road; the scenic beauty of the forest, lake, and abundant wildlife; the historic sites of the Clinton Furnace and Cross Castle; and sometimes to just get the wits scared out of you.

This rugged ten mile stretch of deserted road is so rich in lore that it has been attracting late night visitors for generations. The stories that these sightseeing sojourners have brought back with them of their adventures are sometimes harrowing, often terrifying, and almost always intriguing. Many of these tales of midnight joyrides may seem unbelievable, while others leave one wondering just where truth ends, and an overactive imagination begins.

You can decide for yourself whether or not to believe some of the more fantastic stories about this mysterious road, but one thing is for sure, the people who lived these tales believe them, and they will not soon forget their experiences.

An Introduction to Clinton Road and the Castle

It's amazing that a patch of woods and a few piles of rocks right off of Route 23 in West Milford could be the source of so many rumors and tall tales. Where else can you find a place where Satan worshippers hide behind every tree, sacrificed goats and chickens litter the woods like leftover barbecue, and black trucks driven by escaped lunatics chase innocent teenagers over dark, pothole-ridden roads? Where else have so many people have reported the eerie sensation of being watched by something in the woods, strange lights beating white streaks on their cars, or hearing disembodied childish laughter emanate from a remote playground? Where else do ghostly boys with quarters, and snakes alternately appear on the streets? And has it always had such a bad reputation?

Rumors of bad vibes have been floating in the area since it was first settled. In 1905, J. Percy Crayon wrote about the woods just beyond the Clinton Furnace: "It was never advisable to pass through the "five mile woods" after dark, for…tradition tells us they were infested with bands of robbers, and counterfeiters, to say nothing of the witches that held their nightly dances and carousels at Green Island, and the ghosts that then made their appearance in such frightful forms, that it was more terrifying to the peaceful inhabitants than wild animals or even the Indians, that often passed."

Cross Castle Ruins

Once upon a time there was and actual castle in the woods off of Clinton Road. Most who remember it liken the edifice to something out of a fairy tale or Gothic English novel, rising from the mist. Clinton, or Cross Castle is how most locals remember it, named for the man who had it built – Richard J. Cross, but Cross himself and his family called the place Bearfort, after the mountain range it was nestled in. In 1905 Cross bought heavily forested land around Newfoundland, NJ, and began construction of the castle-like mansion. Its walls, which have intrigued so many people over the years, were 3-stories high. You can see remnants of the concrete today.

Cross died in 1917, and the family sold the property to the City of Newark in 1919. A fire eventually destroyed much of the remaining wooden structure, leaving the stone walls intact as a place where hikers, teenagers, and the occasional Satan worshippers could congregate. Those walls, eventually painted over with graffiti and picked apart for souvenirs, were knocked down in 1988 when the Newark Watershed Commission deemed the structure unsound. –*Joanne Austin*

Cross Castle: The Unholy Edifice

Castles seem to have always inspired the imagination. The Cross Castle is no exception. For centuries writers have chosen mountaintop castles as the settings for their tales. From the terror of Count Dracula's Castle in Transylvania's Carpathians, to Dr. Frankenstein's lair in the Bavarian Alps, castles have provided the perfect environment for fear and ungodly mayhem.

In its abandoned state the ruins of Cross Castle would become the stuff of legend. For some it may have just been a place to party, for others it was a place of pure evil. The castle on Clinton Road will live on in local lore and weird New Jersey mythology.

Partying At Cross Castle

Back in 1979 I went to the castle for the first time. We would tell people the Jackson Whites would cut a tree to block the road. Then, when you would turn around, you'd find that they had cut another one down. That's when they would get you. –*Victor*

The Albinos of Clinton Road

One time, when a bunch of us climbed up the walls, we did see something. We were up there and saw two white figures. They were about 100 yards away from our friends on the ground. They couldn't see them from their vantage point. They came to within 100 yards of

the group and then disappeared into the woods. When we got back to terra firma, we told them about it and that's when the stories started coming; there was instantly talk about an albino village in the woods. *–Brian R.*

Never Get Out of Your Car On Clinton Road!

One road in New Jersey that's really terrifying is Clinton Road off Route 23 north in West Milford. The road is well known for many mysterious occurrences and weird activity.

Cross Castle, which used to be off Clinton Road, had dungeons where many bodies were found. Satan worshipping was active around Cross Castle and the KKK was also rumored to be active in the area. Never get out of your car, especially at night. It is definitely weird. *– U101*

The KKK and Kross Kastle

Two friends, brothers who I will call "John" and "Bill," regularly took excursions through areas of West Milford known for their legends. They were driving down Clinton Road. Both noticed a bonfire near Cross Castle. As they drew closer, they saw a group of people dressed in robes around a bonfire. They could make out the leader, who was dressed in typical KKK regalia.

One of the members of this meeting spotted them and called out to stay where they were. Of course John and Bill took off to their car and left. Their hooded friends got into their vehicles and began chasing them! John and Bill said they were wielding shotguns. *–Sly C.*

Chants at Clinton Castle

After one night of hearing tales, me and six others decided to go to the castle. As we got up the dirt road that wound up to the castle.

We parked the cars, got out , it a fire and drank some beer. After a half-hour we began to hear chanting and chains rattling. One of the girls started to go into a seizure. Three of us tried to move her to no avail. It was like she was nailed to the rock.

Then the chanting stopped. The girl came around. We all looked at each other like "What the hell is going on here?" *–G.J.R*

The Writings on the Wall at Cross Castle

I had a friend who lived near Clinton Road. He used to take me on May Day and Halloween's Eve to spy on Wiccans practicing in the areas near his house. The proof I have is more than a kid's flashback of witches. It pertains to what was transcribed on the walls of Cross Castle and how a historical fact about the writing will reveal that a Satanist movement was using the area for their practices.

It was a nice afternoon in 1977. We decided to get our packs, a tent, and a rifle to spend the night up in the woods. I took a journal along with me. When we came upon the castle we

Cross Castle Interior

were amazed, as always, at how it stood out in the woods. We entered it and were shocked to learn that someone had put up two huge boards with words spelled out in red paint. The nature of the writing intrigued me so I copied down what the walls proclaimed, and my friend snapped a picture.

The journal stayed in a box until six months ago, when after my wife's death, I was going through everything and read it. What was once scribbled down in my youth was now revealed as one of the writings of Anton LeVay of The Church of Satan!

I went to a local book store to match my journal with the Lex Satanicus. I concluded that the tales about Clinton Road were seriously understated! The Satanists who practiced there were not a joke, but a local grotto of people using dark forces to bring forth their evil reign. Now when I go to Clinton Road I look at everything in a different light. *–Scot*

Satanic Scripture Puzzles Wrecking Crew

A demolition crew came in and destroyed the castle, and all that remained was the basement. On the walls were old Satanic scripture. This baffled the demolition crew because there did not appear to be any entrance to this area of the castle. *–Nick B.*

Spirit Souvenirs from the Inner Circle

I have actually taken three trips to the castle. The first time we found the castle by accident. We wanted to see if the rumors were true. I will tell anyone: NEVER step over the boundary of the castle. One of my friends did so. She became stiff, and ran out of there. She said she saw something in her head – a little boy being slaughtered. We decided to get the hell out of there.

We realized that my other friend had dropped his wallet on the trail. We headed back there around 11pm. I was nervous about going back, so the other people did without me. My friend once again started gagging. We drove to our local diner, and I noticed a bruise across my friend's neck. *–Teddi*

Clinton Road Makes Me Sick… Literally

About a month ago, my sister, her husband, my boyfriend and myself decided to take a ride down Clinton Road. We started from Route 23 and it was around 12:30 AM. I can't exactly explain the feeling I started getting. I don't know if my imagination was going wild, but my sister, my boyfriend and me started telling my brother-in-law to turn around. I felt so scared and sick to my stomach that I couldn't even breathe. It was an oppressive feeling like just pure evil and I definitely believe that something would have happened if we had just kept

going. *–Anonymous*

Clinton Road Skids

Dead Man's Corner

I have heard that down by the very end of Clinton Road, after you go down about 12 miles there is a place called Dead Man's Corner. I heard this is where the animal sacrifices take place. If you see a cow, dead or alive, in the middle of the road, DO NOT GET OUT! They want you to get out of the car to kill you or eat you. Just turn around and floor it. *–Allison R.*

Strange Occurrences

Even Aliens Like to Cruise Clinton Road

I know you guys get a lot of stories, some true, others a little fabricated, but what I saw on Clinton Rd one night was in my eyes a UFO.

After we went around Dead Man's Curve we suddenly saw a huge flash in the sky, and a triangular disk. This thing was damn big in the sky, and was hovering over the trees about 250 feet in the air. My friends and I always said we would pull over if we saw a UFO, but we were too scared. After about 5 minutes, it disappeared and we took off. *–Steve, Kinnelon*

More Clinton Road UFOs

I too have seen a UFO on Clinton Road. It was mad low in the sky and was so big that it looked like it could fit a small army in it. Then, in the blink of an eye, it was gone. *–Seanie P., Vernon*

Hundreds of Blue, Red and White Lights

We were at Clinton Road one night. As we went further we saw lights. Hundreds of them, on both sides of the woods – blue ones, red ones, white ones.

We got so freaked out. As we went 75 miles per hour on this 35 mile per hour road, the lights would keep up with us. If we stopped in the middle of the road, they would stay there on each side. Suddenly, they vanished. *–Jay Radicals*

Unearthly Animals

The environs surrounding Clinton Road have always been home for a variety of wildlife, some species wilder than others. Black bears and poisonous snakes have always been present in these West Milford woods, and more recently coyotes have become a feature of the landscape. The threat that these critters pose pales in comparison to the fearful animal apparitions that some of our readers have told us they've encountered on Clinton Road.

Beware the Grayish Whitish Wolf with Red and Yellowish Eyes

I never thought that my first trip to Clinton Road would be horrifying. As we were turning, in the bushes appeared to be a grayish whitish wolf with red and yellowish eyes. Later on, NO JOKE, my friend told me about his first trip where he also saw a grayish whitish wolf with red and yellowish eyes running in the bushes. *–Amy, Pequannock*

The Floating Dog

One legend states that Cross Castle rebuilds itself every October 30th, and the KKK sacrifices a goat. I get scared every time I go down the road that leads to that area, because the one time I went down there a strange figure chased our truck out of Clinton. When I got a good look at it, I screamed and told my friend to drive faster. It was a dog of some sort, but it was floating, not running. *–Kelly* B.

Is There Anything NOT in the Woods of Clinton Road?

One night my sister and her friend were driving down Clinton Rd when my sister's friend says "What IS that?" My sister looks and there was a MONKEY. They were both freaked out. Monkeys aren't common to West Milford. *–Ryan O.*

The Hell Hound Of Clinton Road

After once through this 10 mile road nothing had happened. So we went back, and checked out a dirt side road. Nothing was around except for dense woods. It felt very eerie and the "trespassers will be shot on sight" sign did not ease my mind. That's when I noticed something walking toward our car. All eight of us saw the same thing; an animal of some sort. We went 60 down this off road with this "animal" on our back. Finally we got back on Clinton Road and got pulled over by a cop and the animal disappeared! People say it's a hell hound or the Jersey Devil…all I know is that it was not human. *–Jessica*

The Ghosts of the Dangerous Curves

The ghosts of the Dangerous Curve are said to be visible if you drive up to it at midnight, then turn off your car lights. It is also said that on the island in the center of the reservoir there are many Satanic rituals, including KKK happenings taking place involving animal sacrifices. *– Laura R*

Ghostly Camaros

This girl was racing down Clinton Road toward Route 23 in her blue 1988 Chevy Camaro. She slammed right into the cement divider on the sharpest turn on Clinton Road, and was killed instantly. If you tell someone else the story of the accident while driving down Clinton Road, you will see a blue 1988 Chevy Camaro drive by. When my friend Vince told me this story, we saw headlights in the distance, and when the car passed we made it out to be the Camaro. *–Mike*

Ghosts Rangers Patrol the Forest

Hanging out at the old castle was great. Much further up the road on the right there are trails

that go up the mountain to a lake called Terrace Pond. The pond was crystal clear and great for swimming. We used to camp up there and we had a really weird occurrence that happened to us.

We were camping one night around 1am and two park rangers noticed our fire and walked over to us. They were concerned about the fire, drinking, etc. We asked if our vehicles would be OK where they were, and asked if they would be ticketed. They said they were fine and no ticketing would be carried out.

In the morning we ventured down the mountainside and approached our cars and they had two summonses per car. West Milford police and Newark Watershed authorities approached us and we asked them about the park rangers and they looked bewildered. We then told them that we were speaking with two younger men and they said that we were OK to stay and camp, our vehicles were OK, and we would not be fined.

One of the Newark Watershed Authorities replied, "What did these park rangers look like and what were they wearing?" We described their appearance, and the authority told us that there were no park rangers patrolling the property anymore, and the two men we saw that night were killed on patrol in 1939.

We did not know what to say. Did we imagine this? Why was the authority questioning the description, did he know these men when they were alive? Are we the only people that have encountered these rangers? –*Anonymous*

Clinton Road Witches Can Crawl Inside Your Mind

After high school, I started working in Chilton Hospital's Emergency room – the night shift. One Saturday night an ambulance brought in a woman kicking and screaming with third-degree burns on her legs. She was high on heroin and claimed to be a witch. I asked the ambulance driver where they found her.

"Walking along Rt. 23 near Clinton Road," he said.

She was up there with a group of people worshiping Satan when they decided to throw her into a bonfire.

After we gave her something to bring her down from the drugs, she became violent to the point where I had to tie her down with restraints. She was yelling things like, "My powers are too strong for you," and "I'm going to crawl into your mind." Well, it must have worked because I haven't forgotten about her. –*Ron S.*

Mob Rub-Outs and the Head in the Bag

Reading some of your Clinton Road stories made me think of a story a guy I worked with went through. He was riding his bike along Clinton Road when a huge bird suddenly flew out of the woods right in front of him and flew off. He was very startled, so he stopped and got off his bike. He started walking into the woods, and another bird came flying out. He thought he recognized the bird type. They were vultures.

Ghost of 'guilt ridden' nanny spotted staring from the window of haunted B&B

mirror.co.uk

- Nov 07, 2014 14:12
- By Kara O'Neill, Rebecca Stubbs

Strange incidents have been recorded at the property for many years, but this is the first time a spectre has been seen

Mercury

Ghost hunt: Michelle has taken part in 12 investigations so far

A ghost of a guilt-ridden nanny who let a child die in her care has been spotted in the window of a haunted house.

The spooky photograph was taken by Michelle Morris at Langsmeade House in Oxford, which the 42-year-old claims was empty at the time.

It is believed the ghostly figure is that of a nanny who was riddled with guilt after a child died in her care after falling out of a tree around the time of World War II.

Michelle Morris, who also studies Forensic Psychology at the Open University, saw the nanny in an upstairs window whilst on a ghost hunt in Oxford.

The legend is believed to be a nanny who remains in the house because she feels guilty after a child died 'falling out of a tree' whilst under her care.

Mercury

Spotted: The spooky photograph was taken by Michelle Morris at Langsmeade House in Oxford

Langsmeade House in Oxford was empty at the time of the picture, except for the ghostly figure on the top floor of the haunted building.

Forensic psychology student and amateur spook sleuth Michelle said: "I was outside with a group of guests and we were investigating the grounds.

"We decided to head towards the house and when I looked up there was a lot of activity on the top floor.

"That's when I started taking photos as I knew it was something paranormal."

Langsmeade House was built in 1924 and there have been a number of reported sightings of ghosts from the bed and breakfast's guests.

"A few guests have seen a young boy in old fashioned clothing cross the corridor on the first floor," it is claimed on the B&B's website.

Spooky: Is that a ghost in the window?

"Others reported an army officer standing next to their bed, lost in his thoughts. However, strangely enough, nobody has ever felt uncomfortable.

If indeed there is a spirit in Langsmeade House, it surely is a benign character who obviously so loves the house and that he has no intention to move on."

Mercury

Spooked Michelle was on her first ghost hunt with the Swindon Ghosthunters and the team claimed she felt temperatures drop and heard creepy noises.

She said: "John Williams, who runs the Swindon Ghosthunters, says he heard a child whisper in his ear, 'I fell out of a tree', and I think it was the ghost of the guilty nanny."

Michelle has been hunting ghosts for a year and has so far participated in more than 12 investigations.

She said: "I'm fascinated by what is out there and whether there is anything for us after death."

"I love what I do and this photo makes it all worthwhile."

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While not normally associated with coal mining, Tennessee indeed once produced the black diamond. As a result, the state suffered its share of related destruction and devastation. A series of disasters at the turn of the Twentieth Century had locals wondering if perhaps there was more to the legends that carried from household to household. Could it be possible that the mines around Briceville, Tennessee, were haunted?

Knoxville Iron Company

The Knoxville Iron Company was organized in 1868. It was the first major manufacturing firm in the area after the Civil War. Initially, the company only used free miners. Due to constant interruptions from labor disputes and striking, the company began leasing convict labor in 1878.

Methane gas often came in between the joints and cracks in the old mine. The often-starved convict miners learned to ignite this as a means of cooking whatever wild game they could find. It was against company policy and most were punished if caught. There were also several instances where the convicts were forced to work in portions of the mine that were poorly ventilated. Many met their death deep within those bleak tunnels.

Coal Creek War

Free miners resented the convicts and the mining companies, for taking their jobs. The “Coal Creek War,” began in 1891 when those miners decided to fight the company and local authorities. Until 1893, destruction reigned in this area. Buildings were burned, the angry miners freed many dangerous convicts, and dozens died on both sides. The war also ended Tennessee’s convict labor-lease system, although Knoxville Iron’s convict labor contract didn’t expire until 1896.

One incident demonstrated the seemingly senseless violence. A group of men in uniform took Dick Drummond from his boarding house on the night of August 11. Drummond was an ex-soldier who worked in the Shamrock mine. He was found the next morning hanging from a rail bridge trestle, at what is today Drummond Bridge. He had been lynched at 2 am. The lynching was to avenge the death of Private Laugherty, or Loughler. Three witnesses later claimed Drummond didn’t murder the young private because he was with them. Legends state the ghost of Drummond continues to haunt the area seeking revenge on those who

lynched him.

During the 1890s, the mine used by Knoxville Iron was eventually abandoned. The continuous buildup of toxic gases posed a hazard for all. It would only be a matter of time before it exploded.

Fraterville

Fraterville was a successful and massive mine owned by the Coal Creek Coal Company, established in 1870. The tunnels branched out for miles underground and eventually overlapped those tunnels abandoned by the Knoxville Iron mine. Mine officials barricaded the old tunnels off in 1901. They said it was to prevent gases from the old tunnel entering into their mine. The miners weren't so certain. Rumors traveled that the barricade was really to keep the spirits from that old mine from traveling into the new mine. Miners reported seeing specters and shades of the old miners moving deep within those long empty corridors.

On May 19, 1902, locals felt the tremors when the mine exploded. The Coal Creek mine was the safest in the region, according to officials. Despite the safe practices, 216 miners died. A new shift had just begun working. It remains the worst explosion in the state's history. Many bodies were found dismembered by the force behind the blast.

The family of miner Charles Brooks reported one experience unlike most others. The family was at home. His wife was making the beds. The family heard his footsteps approach the front porch. He crossed the porch and entered the home. He walked into the bedroom where his wife noticed him. Just as she asked him why he was home so early, the figure disappeared. Brooks died in the earlier explosion.

The small community of Fraterville was nearly destroyed. Many households lost all male relatives. Only three men survived in the entire community, leaving hundreds of widows and over a thousand fatherless children.

Cross Mountain Mine

Death hadn't stopped visiting Briceville, or the mines. On December 9, 1911, another explosion erupted in the Cross Mountain mine. At 7:30 am, area residents felt what they believed was an earthquake. Mine officials watched a sheet of flame shoot from one mouth of the mine. The mine had been inspected only weeks earlier and was found to be safe. The explosion took a total of 84 lives. Like Fraterville, the cause for Cross Mountain's explosion is still debated.

Today

Stories circulated that the explosions were caused by the ghosts of convict miners who were still lighting gas leaks to cook their food. There are also reports of sobbing and crying around the entrances of the ill-fated mines, as well as in the cemeteries where they are buried.

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Glowing bananas help researchers track cell death

by Jeremy Jacquot - Sept 14 2009, 11:15am PDT
Sept 14 2009, 11:15am PDT arstechnica.com

When fall comes and plants begin to prepare for the long winter, the chlorophyll in their leaves is broken down. This is probably the most dramatic example of the general process known as senescence, a form of programmed cell death that deciduous plants use to divert nutrients to areas of active growth or to store them in anticipation of a resource-intensive task like seed production. (Programmed cell death is also a normal component of human development, where it's called apoptosis). Now, researchers have found that it may be possible to track the process of senescence by taking advantage of the fact that, in some species, one chlorophyll breakdown product is fluorescent.

In fruits, the release of ethylene, a gaseous hormone derived from the amino acid methionine, triggers the process of aging, or, as it's more commonly referred to, ripening. As in senescent leaves, the chlorophylls in ripe fruits are degraded into colorless end products, known as nonfluorescent chlorophyll catabolites (NCCs), through a series of reactions. At the same time, enzymes in the fruits begin to hydrolyze starch and pectin, making them softer and sweeter and, thus, more appealing to hungry animals (like humans).

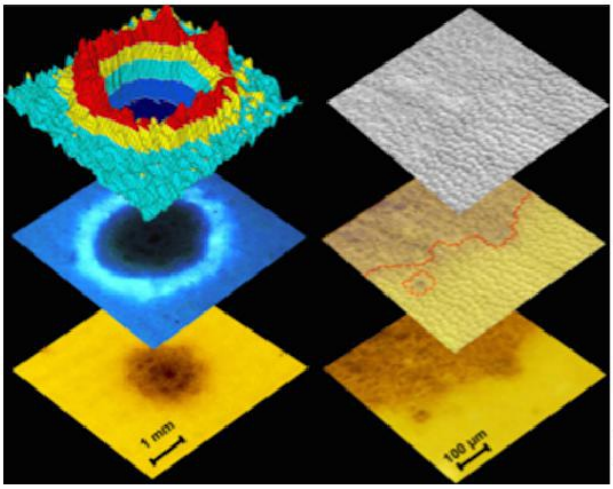
For a while, scientists believed that chlorophyll catabolism followed a similar trajectory in most plants and fruits. Recently, however, a team of researchers led by Simone Moser of the University of Innsbruck in Austria discovered a unique class of catabolites in banana peels, called fluorescent chlorophyll catabolites (FCCs), which glowed blue when exposed to ultraviolet (UV) light. In follow-up work, they have now demonstrated that FCCs act as *in vivo* markers for sections of the peel that are undergoing rapid senescence, allowing the researchers to closely track the ripening process. More importantly, the discovery of these catabolites suggests that there may be more than one path of chlorophyll breakdown in fruits and, perhaps, in some plants. Their findings are detailed in *PNAS*.

To identify the FCCs, the group analyzed extracts of peels taken from the regions surrounding ripe, dark spots using high performance liquid chromatography (HPLC), which separates the constituents of a mixture. The major component, *Mc*-FCC-49 (a hypermodified, polar molecule), was highly abundant in the luminescent areas around the spots while two less polar compounds, *Mc*-FCC-56 and *Mc*-FCC-53, were found in large amounts in extracts of whole banana peels.

In general, as the dark spots on the peel began to accumulate, *Mc*-FCC-49 becomes more common while *Mc*-FCC-53, the main FCC of ripening bananas, becomes scarcer. The appearance of *Mc*-FCC-49 thus marked the transition of "ripe" bananas to "rotten" ones, according to the authors.

An analysis of the fluorescence spectra of the glowing rings showed a maximum around 445 nm, the blue region of the visible spectrum, which was the result of high concentrations of *Mc*-FCC-49 collecting in the areas surrounding the spots.

They then tracked the spread of a dark spot with a 24-hour fluorescence analysis to determine how the intensity of the luminescence fluctuated over time. At first, the intensity of the luminescence in the ring increased sharply as that from within the dark spot continuously decreased. By the end of the 24-hour period, however, the ring had lost most of its luminescence.



Enlarged images of areas of a dark spot and its surroundings showing hypermodified FCCs
Image credit: PNAS

Further analyses by scanning electron microscopy (SEM) revealed that the stomata, tiny pores found on the surface of plants that enable gas exchange, were still active in the intact peels of the ripening bananas. Since the dark spots first began to appear in areas surrounding the stomata, the authors were able to study the luminescent rings at a cellular level. While the cells within the spots were dead and shrunken, those found within the rings were still alive, though close to death.

FCCs, which appear in many forms in a variety of plant tissues, could play a similar role in indicating the progression of senescence elsewhere. For instance, a polar FCC with an almost identical structure to one found in extracts from banana leaves was recently identified in the Peace Lily, a distant relative of the banana, where it is thought to be the main chlorophyll catabolite.

This study expands significantly on the researchers' previous work by showing that the intensity of the blue luminescence produced by the FCCs could be used to track senescence *in vivo* in a variety of plants. The discovery and further study of FCCs in other plants could shed light on aging and other mysterious processes related to cell death. On a more practical level, FCCs could act as molecular trackers for ripening, making it easier to determine whether a piece of fruit is just right or too ripe.

PNAS, 2009. DOI: 10.1073/pnas.0908060106

Listing image by PNAS

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Going great guns at 100

By Lori Weisberg 2 a.m. June 28, 2009
June 28, 2009

utsandiego.com

Medal of Honor recipient and Pearl Harbor survivor John Finn arrived with a military escort in period uniforms at his 100th-birthday celebration on in June 2009 at La Posta Diner in Pine Valley. — *Nelvin C. Cepeda / Union-Tribune*

Medal of Honor recipient and Pearl Harbor survivor John Finn arrived with a military escort in period uniforms at his 100th-birthday celebration on in June 2009 at La Posta Diner in Pine Valley.

PROFILE

John Finn

Born: July 23, 1909

Residence: Live Oak Springs

Navy career: 1926 to 1956; retired as a lieutenant

Commendations: Medal of Honor, presented for valor during the Pearl Harbor attack

"I'm going to say it again ... I cannot believe this is happening," John Finn said as he surveyed a crowd of more than 2,000 who traveled to Pine Valley to celebrate his 100th birthday.

The Medal of Honor recipient has spoken all over the country about his heroic counter-assault on enemy planes at Pearl Harbor nearly 68 years ago, and he was feted in March by President Barack Obama in the Oval Office.

But nothing could compare to yesterday's much more personal tribute, Finn said.

“Who'd ever expect this kind of crowd out here?” the Live Oak Springs resident asked, supporting himself on two canes yet fit and sharp-witted for his nearly 100 years. “There's no way anything else can compare to this.”

Finn is the oldest of 96 living recipients of the Medal of Honor, the nation's highest decoration for valor. His birthday isn't until July 23, but his schedule was so full that his party was arranged a month early.

He arrived at the celebration in style, seated in a military jeep, and was greeted by loud applause, hoots and hollers. He later was saluted with a Marine Corps Color Guard.

American flags lined Old Highway 80 leading to La Posta Diner, where owner Bud Wharton had organized the celebration.

“He eats at my restaurant quite frequently, and he's such a wonderful man that I decided that he should have a birthday party,” said Wharton, who transformed an old-fashioned barbecue into a fundraiser for wounded members of the military and their families.

The Nice Guys of San Diego, a charitable businessmen's organization, yesterday started off the fundraising with a $10,000 contribution to its Victory Fund and hoped to raise $30,000 more by day's end.

Finn, who had been assigned to Kaneohe Bay Naval Air Station when Japanese aircraft attacked Hawaii in December 1941, seemed genuinely humbled by the praise heaped upon him by a host of speakers, from charitable and veterans organizations to members of the military and elected leaders.

Monique LaChappa, tribal chairwoman of the Campo Band of Mission Indians of the Kumeyaay Nation, lauded Finn as a devoted friend who became a foster parent, with his late wife, Alice, to five children from the reservation.

“Thank you from the bottom of my heart for helping my people to see a different way,” LaChappa said, her voice trembling.

Members of the tribe gave Finn a brightly colored “elders blanket” that they draped over his shoulders.

A couple of older fellows serenaded Finn with “The John Finn Song” in recognition of his Pearl Harbor valor (“Johnny didn't know he'd be a hero on that day”). And Dianne Jacob, chairwoman of the county Board of Supervisors, presented Finn with a proclamation declaring yesterday John Finn Day.

Later, nearly three dozen members of the Patriot Guard Riders revved their motorcycle engines in tribute to Finn.

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Google Internet balloon drops in on farmer

Paul McNamara — News Editor

networkworld.com

Buyers of the earthly explanation for whatever fell from the sky in Roswell, N.M. back in 1947 are likely to appreciate the reaction of a South African farmer who recently came across what he assumed to be a crashed weather balloon.

In this case, however, the confusion proved only temporary.

From a *Wall Street Journal* account:

> According to a report Thursday in the Afrikaans-language Beeld newspaper, Urbanus Botha, who farms in the arid landscape of the Karoo south of Bloemfontein and Lesotho in the center of South Africa, came across the crashed balloon and initially thought it a weather balloon from the nearby weather station at De Aar. He called up the station's office but nobody picked up, so he packed it into his pickup truck, thinking that its plastic could come in handy as he planned to repaint his shed.
>
> "The huge piece of plastic filled my whole van," Botha said.
>
> Botha didn't know what to make of the balloon, especially since it contained several electronic components. His 20-year-old daughter, Sarita, was just as intrigued, and took photos of the balloon on her smartphone, sending them to her brothers John, 30, and Benny, 27. The brothers identified the words "Made in the USA" and "Google X" on the pictures, and so Googled "Google X" and balloons.
>
> "We realized the balloon was part of the Google Loon Project," Sarita told Beeld.

Project Loon is a Google undertaking designed to provide Internet access to remote areas around the world that might otherwise be left wanting.

Here is Google's website explaining the project?

So what exactly crashed onto this farmers land? From Wikipedia:

> The balloon envelopes used in the project are made by Raven Aerostar,[15] and are composed of polyethylene plastic about 3 mil or 0.076 mm (0.0030 in) thick. The balloons are superpressure balloons filled with helium, stand 15 m (49 ft) across and 12 m (39 ft) tall when fully inflated, and carry a custom air pump system dubbed the "Croce"[16] that pumps in or releases air to ballast the balloon and control its elevation.[1] A small box weighing 10 kg (22 lb) containing each balloon's electronic equipment hangs underneath the inflated envelope. This box contains circuit boards that control the system, radio antennae and a Ubiquiti Networks Rocket M2[17] to communicate with other balloons and with Internet antennae on the ground, and batteries to store solar power so the balloons can operate during the night.

Fig. 1.
The Grave Creek Stone
Smithsonian photograph 90-9022
(MS 3146, E.H. Davis Collection, National Anthropological Archives)

The Grave Creek Stone was discovered in 1838 during the excavation of the Grave Creek Mound, in Moundsville, West Virginia, on the Ohio River, about 10 miles south of Wheeling. The stone, an actual photograph of which appears in Figure 1 above, was a small inscribed sandstone disk, about 1 7/8" (4.8 cm) wide, and 1 1/2" (3.6 cm) high. The reverse side was uninscribed.

In 1838, the mound was reported to have been 69 feet high and 295 feet in diameter at the base, making it the largest of the Adena mounds. Today the mound is preserved in the Grave Creek Mound State Park. According to the Park website, the mound is currently believed to have been built between 250 BC and 150 BC. Figure 2 below shows the mound in its present condition. Note the relative size of the cars and house.

Fig. 2
The Grave Creek Mound today
Lifted from Home in West Virginia website.

It is not known where the stone itself is today. In 1868 it was in the collection of E.H. Davis, of Squier and Davis fame, before most of Davis's collection was sold to the Blackmore Museum, now part of the British Museum. Fig. 1 above, the only known photograph of the actual stone, is cropped from a photograph of items 60 - 65 of the Davis collection taken shortly before the sale. Nevertheless, the British Museum's North American Ethnographic Collection confirms that the Grave Creek Stone is not at present in the Museum's Squier and Davis collections (personal communication, 12/4/89). According to Barnhart (1986, p. 124n), the stone was probably in the collection of Wills de Hass at the time of his death in 1910, and may have passed from there "to parts unknown." De Hass's papers are preserved in a library in West Virginia, and may provide some information, or even contain the stone itself, but I have not checked this out.

The Cast and Wax Impression

In 1868, however, Davis made a plaster cast of the stone and deposited it in the Smithsonian

Letter 17: 234-5, 1930.

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Kelley, David H. "Epigraphy and Other Fantasies," *The Review of Archaeology*, vol. 15, #2 (April 19, 1995), pp. 8-14.

Smith, C. Edward, Jr. "What the Grave Creek Stone Does not Say: An Epigraphic and Philological Analysis." PO Box 96, Colerain, OH 43916. Revised Jan. 1998, June 2006.

Whittlesey, Charles. "Archaeological Frauds," *Western Reserve and Northern Ohio Historical Society Tract No. 33,* Nov. 1876, pp. 1-7.

Whittlesey, Charles. "The Grave Creek Inscribed Stone," *Western Reserve and Northern Ohio Historical Society Tract No. 44,* April 1879, pp. 65-68.

Williams, Stephen. *Fantastic Archaeology: The Wild Side of North American Prehistory.* University of Pennsylvania Press, 1991.

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Page written and maintained by J. Huston McCulloch
Send comments to: mcculloch.2@osu.edu

Drawings on this page may be freely downloaded and copied, with credit to this website. Figure 3 may not be used without the permission of the Smithsonian Department of Anthropology.

Last revised 2/1/08

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Institution. In 1990, Donal Buchanan and I visited the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History in order to view the cast and to check out rumors that the Smithsonian had the original. The NMNH in fact has *four* casts of the stone, but no original.

(C) Smithsonian Institution

Fig. 3.
Cast of the Grave Creek Stone.
Smithsonian Institution Photograph No. 6768
(Catalogue No. 7252)

Two of the casts have catalog number NMNH 7252, one NMNH 138470, and one NMNH 325934. The darker of the two 7252s, which I call 7252 #1, is painted realistically and signed at the bottom of the front in pale white ink, "E.H. Davis W. Va." It is shown in Figure 3 above. The white marks under the figure at the bottom are just the remnants of Davis's signature, upside down. The second, lighter colored NMNH 7252 #2 and the two higher numbered casts appear to be derivative casts made from the above NMNH 7252 #1.

The National Anthropological Archives (MS 3146, E.H. Davis Collection) also has a wax impression of the stone that Davis made at the same time. It is unprotected and badly cracked, but confirms some details that do not show well on the cast. In particular, it clearly shows an X-shaped letter at the left end of the second line, and a lozenge- or diamond-shaped letter at the left end of the third line, that only partially "took" on the cast.

Our inspection confirmed the view of Charles Whittlesey, (1876) that the drawing by Capt. Seth Eastman, which appeared in Henry R. Schoolcraft's 1850 *Indian Tribes of the United States*, was the only reliable drawing of the stone, of the six depicted by Whittlesey. Unfortunately, many of the early scholars who made serious attempts to interpret the inscription, including Rafn, Jomard, and Bing-Lévy, worked from seriously inferior copies of the stone. This may at least in part account for the total divergence of the early interpretations, as to both language and content.

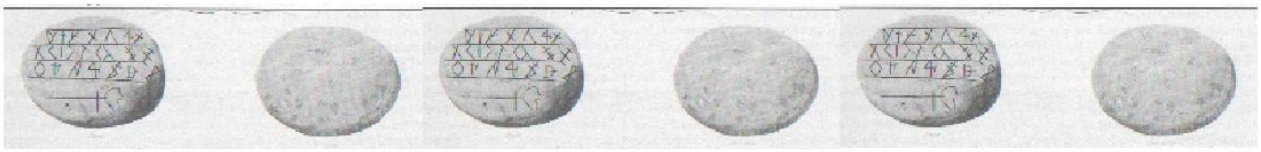

Fig. 4
Photocopy of Seth Eastman drawing of Grave Creek Stone
from Henry R. Schoolcraft *Indian Tribes of the United States*, 1850,
by way of Barnhart (1986).

(added 2/08)

It should be noted that although Whittlesey (1876, p. 2) presents what he calls a "Copy of Grave Creek Stone -- No. 1. by Captain Eastman, United States Army," what he shows is not actually Eastman's copy of the stone, but rather a *redrawing* of Eastman's copy. Furthermore, his redrawing differs in two important respects from Eastman's -- First, Eastman draws the leftmost letter in the first line with its two verticals meeting at the bottom to form a "V", whereas Whittlesey has them more nearly parallel, and distinctly open at the bottom. And second, Eastman correctly draws the leftmost letter on the third line as a lozenge or diamond that closes at its top, whereas Whittlesey draws this letter to be distinctly open at the top. In a second, 1879 article, Whittlesey includes his redrawing of Eastman again, with the somewhat misleading explanation, "I insert again the only correct copy made by Captain Eastman, United States Army, from the original in 1850, for *Schoolcraft's Indian Tribes."* Williams (1991, p. 84) also reproduces Whittlesey's 1876 illustration, giving an 1879 article by M.C. Read as his immediate source.

A New Drawing

Below is my own attempt to draw the inscription, based on a tracing of the above photograph of the cast, supplemented by our inspection of the actual cast and wax impression.

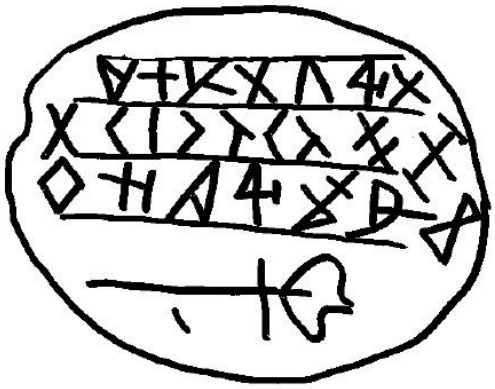

Fig. 5.
The Grave Creek Inscription

It is not obvious from the inscription itself whether the lines are to be read from left to right or right to left, or perhaps even back and forth or "boustrophedon." It is not even obvious which end of the stone is the top. Many of the letters are invertible top for bottom, and two actually appear along with their own inverse. I have merely followed the universal convention of placing the figure at the bottom.

The horizontal guide lines are more shallow than the letters themselves, and are not part of the inscription. In Figure 5 below, I have eliminated them and separated the lines for clarity.

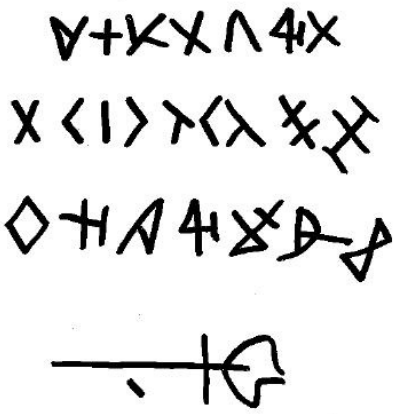

Fig. 6.
The Letters of the Grave Creek Inscription

The principal difference between my drawing and Eastman's is that in the D-like second letter from the right in the last line, Eastman has drawn the crossbar as a faint wavering line, which one might interpret as a stray scratch, while in fact it is straight and bold, and definitely part of the letter. I have drawn the vertical of the "D" to extend down below the crossbar to meet the loop, as Eastman did, since this appears to be what was intended. However, this continuation in fact is not very clear on either the cast or the wax impression. It is therefore not inconceivable that the vertical only extends down to the crossbar, as it appears in Whittlesey's Copy #2, from the *American Pioneer,* May 1843, and Copy #3, used by Jomard.

The Early Controversy

Historian Terry Barnhart has recently published an excellent overview (1986) of the 19th century controversy over the authenticity of the Grave Creek Stone. Schoolcraft, Wills de Hass, and J.P. MacLean supported its authenticity, while E.G. Squier, Davis, and M.C. Read regarded it as a forgery. Barnhart's most interesting observation is that in 1847, Squier had made much of the "singular omission" of any mention of the stone in Dr. James W. Clemens' first-hand, day-by day account of the excavation, which appeared in S.G. Morton's 1839 *Crania Americana*. In 1858, however, de Hass managed to produce the manuscript original of Clemens' account, and demonstrated that Morton had merely taken it upon himself to expurgate the stone's discovery from the published version. Dr. Clemens in fact recorded the inscribed stone on the day of its discovery.

In 1877, the Ohio State Archaeological Society appointed a committee to study the authenticity of the stone. Committee member M.C. Read published a strong denunciation, that included a widely cited experiment to determine if the inscription was alphabetic: He asked four persons who had no training in ancient inscriptions to fabricate twenty or more arbitrary "letters" composed of straight lines and combinations of straight lines. "The result, said Read, was that 'In every case an inscription was produced presenting as many indications of being alphabetical' as that on the Grave Creek stone. Accordingly, Read concluded that the Grave Creek inscription was 'just such a medley of characters as anyone would produce who undertook to invent an inscription to puzzle the curious.'" (Barnhart 1986 p. 120)

Committee member Rev. J.B. MacLean, on the other hand, published his own article in which he "did not hesitate to pronounce its authenticity as incontestable.... Regardless of who found the stone or whether it was discovered inside or outside the mound, all professed witnesses agreed it had come from the mound. To MacLean, this was the unassailable preposition." (Barnhart 1986 p. 122)

Barnhart's discussion stops short of the two influential articles by Charles Whittlesey, already

mentioned above. The first, entitled "Archaeological Frauds," (1876) deals at length with the Grave Creek Stone. Whittlesey ominously cites Squier's finding that "Dr. Clemens, in his first account of the opening of the mound, makes no mention of this stone" (p. 5), but himself makes no mention of de Hass's correction of this misconception.

Whittlesey condemns the inscription itself on the very peculiar grounds that even "If the Grave Creek find was free from suspicion as to its integrity, it has undergone so many mutations from transcribers and translators that its value to ethnologists is gone." (1876, p. 5) Whittlesey himself had already demonstrated that most of the copies that had been made of the stone were unreliable. However, even though these inaccurate copies created considerable unfortunate confusion among scholars, they in no way altered the inscription itself or in any way lessened any ultimate value it might have to ethnologists.

It was also true that the many attempts at translation differed completely as to substance and even purported language and alphabet. However, this does not demonstrate that *none* of the proposed translations could be of any merit, but merely that *at most one* could be of any merit. Even if they all proved erroneous (which Whittlesey did not even begin to attempt to demonstrate in either of his articles), it still would not follow that there could *never* be a valid translation. Nor would they in any way hamper any future valid translation. In any event, the disagreement among the translations may have been more the fault of the bad copies the translators had to work with than of the inscription or of the translators themselves.

Whittlesey concludes that "The best authorities in the United States have condemned it during many years. The preponderances of proof as well as of probabilities are decidedly against it." (1876, p. 5) The very title of his article clearly classifies it as a fraud.

In his second, 1879 article, entitled "The Grave Creek Inscribed Stone," Whittlesey intriguingly backs off his earlier position that the stone itself is a clearcut hoax. Instead, he now merely insists that the inscription is *not alphabetic*: "I agree with Prof. Read that the characters on the stone, by whomsoever they were cut, are *not alphabetical or phonetic.* If they have any meaning and are not a mere jumble of characters they must be symbolic or picture writing. It is therefore of small consequence whether the stone is antique or modern, whether it is genuine or a fraud." (p. 66) He concludes, "If Professor Read and myself are right in our conclusions, that the figures are neither of the Runic, Phonician, Canaanite, Hebrew, Libyan, Celtic, or any other alphabet language, its importance has been greatly overrated." (p. 68)

After Whittlesey's two articles the Grave Creek Stone was generally dropped from serious consideration by archaeologists, except as a textbook example of an established hoax. It was so thoroughly discredited that they even lost track of its whereabouts.

Wills de Hass was appointed to head the Smithsonian Bureau of Ethnology's Mound Survey project, but was quickly replaced in favor of Cyrus Thomas. It is not unlikely that this had something to do with his favorable position toward the Grave Creek Stone. Thomas, on the other hand, "took a very strong, almost sarcastic, stance toward the Grave Creek Stone and Schoolcraft's support of it." (Williams 1991, p. 86)

The Bil Stumps Reading

A 1930 article in *Science News Letter* reported in all seriousness that one Andrew Price had at last "cleared up one of the greatest hoaxes in the record of American science," by translating the Grave Creek inscription into "good old West Virginian." (Davis 1930) According to the article, "That hoax, perpetrated by some unknown practical jokesmith, has stood triumphantly undetected for ninety odd years." The inscription, according to Price, reads, in plain English,

BIL STUMPS STONE OCT 14 1838

Price claims that this hoax was inspired by Charles Dickens' *The Pickwick Papers,* published just the year before the Grave Creek mound was opened. In Dickens' novel, Mr. Pickwick discovers a stone bearing the following cryptic inscription:

X
B I L S T
U M
P S H I
S. M.
A R K

After Pickwick announces that he has unearthed "a curious inscription of unquestionable antiquity," the message is ignominiously deciphered as reading

X BIL STUMPS HIS MARK

A diagram accompanying the *Science News Letter* article indicates that Price interprets the three lines on the Grave Creek Stone as follows:

B I L-S T-U M
P S S T O N E
O C T-1 4-1 8 3 8

Over these letters is a transcription of the inscription that is **bad** beyond Whittlesey's wildest imagination. Letters are pushed together or pulled apart and lines added or ignored wherever convenient. Letters from different lines are even joined together, and in several cases letter portions are used more than once in this manner. Even this mutilated transcription must be tortured beyond endurance before it will confess to Price's reading.

The Bil Stumps reading is an amusing spoof that has no true relation to the inscription. Even Williams (1991, p. 87) concurs in this assessment. The only hoax here was that the likes of *Science News Letter* fell for Price's "solution."

The Hough Stone

Figure 7.
The Hough Stone
Photo courtesy Robert B. Miller, Jr.
[Added 8/31/00]

In 1951, Philip R. Hough purchased for $1 an inscribed stone from an assemblage of

unprovenienced Indian artifacts offered for sale by a gun dealer near Steubenville, Ohio. Hough sent a rubbing of the stone to the Smithsonian. He was informed that it closely resembled the Grave Creek stone, and might either be the original or a clever copy. Hough duly reported his find and its circumstances in a note in the *Tennessee Archaeologist* (1952).

In 1988, Hough's grandson Robert B. Miller, Jr., then of Richmond Va., sent a photograph of the Hough stone to the late Victor Moseley, then president of the Midwestern Epigraphic Society. Moseley passed the photo on to me, which is displayed in Figure 6 above.

A close comparison of the Hough stone to the cast shown in Figure 3 above reveals, unfortunately, that it is not the original Grave Creek Stone. Its guide lines are too straight, too evenly spaced, and too parallel. Furthermore, the vertical alignment of the letters does not match that on the cast. It is, however, definitely a deliberate modern copy of the Grave Creek stone, and not, like the Braxton Creek and Ohio County stones, a possible corroborating inscription in the same script. There is no evidence that whoever made it was attempting to pass it off as the genuine article, and Hough is to be commended for his straightforward reporting of the matter.

Fell

Modern interest in the stone has been revived, at least among amateurs like myself, by the late Barry Fell in his 1976 book *America B.C.* (1976a, p. 21, ch. 11). Fell offers yet another entirely different translation of the inscription, stating that the script is Iberian and the language Punic:

The mound raised-on-high for Tasach
This tile
(His) queen caused-to-be-made.

He argues that although the Iberian script was already known in 1838, the phonetic values of the letters were not completely understood until the publication of Diringer's *The Alphabet* in 1968, so that if the inscription yields an intelligible translation using these values, it must be genuine.

Fell provides the details of his translation in (1976b). In this article, he generally follows Eastman's drawing of the stone. However, it should be noted that he adds a short foot to the third letter from the left in the second line, and then reads it, together with its two neighbors, as a single letter (a Semitic *shin*). I see no evidence of a foot or any connection at the base apart from the guideline, which should not be taken as part of the inscription, and believe this group should instead be read as three separate letters. I have no idea how this change would alter sense of his reading.

Fell's translation is incorporated into an exhibit about the stone in the Delf Norona Museum at the Grave Creek Mound State Park. The replica of the stone on display there is not an actual cast of the original stone, but merely an artist's reconstruction based on Eastman's drawing.

Humbug?

The Grave Creek Stone plays the lead role in Chapter 4 of Stephen Williams' 1991 *Fantastic Archaeology*, entitled "The American Humbug: They'll Believe Almost Anything!" Williams initially has the stone first noticed by Schoolcraft five years after the excavation among some artifacts taken from the mound by its owner, Abelard Tomlinson. In his next paragraph, however, Williams indicates that Tomlinson actually exhibited the stone about two years after the excavation (p. 82). Either way, he warns, following Samuel F. Haven, that the claim that the stone came from the mound was greatly "weakened by the time that purportedly elapsed between its discovery and the announcement of the find" (p. 84). He makes no mention of de Hass's 1858 demonstration that Clemens in fact recorded it on the day it was found. Instead, he cautions the reader that "the problem of a time delay is a common thread running through a number of Fantastic Archaeology cases" (p. 85).

Williams places great weight on Read's experiment to determine that the inscription is not alphabetical. "Read ... says: 'It [the inscription] is precisely of such character as would be the result of an ordinary attempt to manufacture an inscription' and that any of the laborers could have made it. Read's well-structured and careful testing should have laid the question of the Grave Creek inscription to rest." (p. 86)

Williams' overall assessment of the stone, echoed in the title of his chapter, is, "Bah, humbug, Mr. Tomlinson." (p. 87)

Kelley

In a critical review of Williams' book, philologist David H. Kelley deals at length with Williams' treatment of the Grave Creek Stone. Kelly is the author of *Deciphering the Mayan Script*, a 1976 text that was instrumental in establishing the phonetic character of the Mayan glyphs. He considers as entirely appropriate Schoolcraft's much-ridiculed, if inconclusive, attempt to identify the alphabet of the inscription.

Kelley writes, "I have a hard time criticizing the view that the inscription is non-alphabetic, for that seems *to me* an obvious fantasy. I think that anyone who could not recognize that obvious fact should, *ipso facto,* disbar himself from any serious discussion of the problem. Williams praises an 'experiment' by Read to determine what geometric forms would be produced by a teacher, a schoolgirl, a druggist, and a college professor asked 'to write down twenty or more arbitrary symbols, not resembling any characters known to them and using only straight lines.' This rubbish is utterly irrelevant to the question of alphabets. If one can match an inscription to a specific alphabet or even to a closely related group of alphabets, it is alphabetic; otherwise, it is not. Inventing imaginary systems (by people familiar with alphabets) seems to have been a useful propaganda device, but such systems do nothing to support Read's conclusion that any of the labourers could have invented such an inscription. 'Bah, humbug, Mr. Read.'" (1995, p. 12)

Kelly goes on to discuss the similar Braxton Creek and Ohio County inscriptions mentioned by Fell, and concludes, "My major point, however, is not to argue that the inscriptions are, indeed, genuine, but rather that I do not find it fantastic to think that they may be. Williams's account makes the Grave Creek inscription look like obvious humbug, but he did not know many important facts which supported Tomlinson's account of the find, and he completely misinterpreted Schoolcraft's comparisons.... Williams's book .... should not be used as a bludgeon against looking at important but unusual data and trying to put such data in a genuinely appropriate archaeological context." (pp 13-14)

Smith

Most recently, Rev. C. Edward Smith, Jr. (1998) has made a detailed study of Fell's (1976b) translation of the Grave Creek inscription. Smith argues that Fell's interpretation of the text as Punic does not work at all, even taking his letter values as given. Personally, I couldn't tell Punic language from Arabic, but Smith cogently maintains that Fell doesn't seem to see the difference either, using as he does Wehr's *Arabic* dictionary to read *Punic*. Both are Semitic languages, but they belong to different branches of the family, and are evidently quite different in many pertinent respects.

Smith attempts no evaluation of Fell's interpretation of the letters themselves as Iberian script, nor of the authenticity of the stone. He concludes, "we simply do *not* know -- at this point in time and history -- what the Grave Creek Stone says -- only what it does *not* say."

Conclusion

The Grave Creek Stone is long lost. It may turn up some day, but in the meanwhile, a surviving cast, a wax impression, Eastman's drawing, and even a fuzzy photograph of the original give us an adequate indication of its appearance. The Hough Stone is a good copy, but regretably is not the original.

Although it was amateurishly excavated, and years later there were numerous discrepancies about the details of its discovery, by all accounts it came out of the interior of the mound. Dr. Clemens documented the inscribed stone on the day of its discovery, even though Morton cut this account from the published version of Clemens' report. There is no particular reason to think the stone is fraudulent.

Although David Kelley regards the inscription as obviously alphabetic, there is still no solid confirmation of Barry Fell's identification of the script as Iberian. Fell's translation of the language as Punic has been sharply criticized by Edward Smith. Perhaps future study will establish a consensus about the alphabet, the language, and/or the message.

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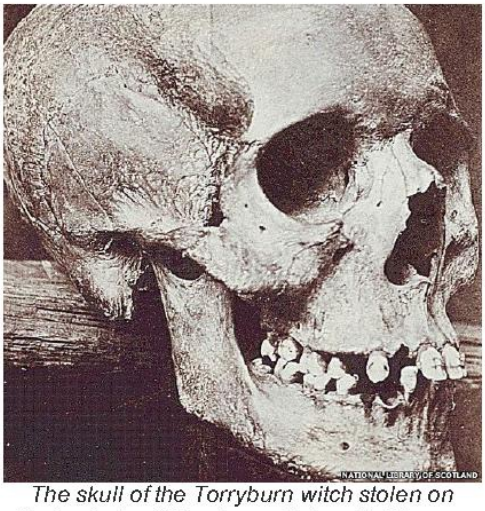
The grave of a witch in Torryburn, Scotland

In 1709, an old poor woman in Torryburn, Scotland named Lilias Adie confessed to being a witch and having sex with the devil. She died in prison, however, before she could be tried, sentenced and burned at the stake.

She was buried in the muck of the coast with a large rock slab over her, most likely to prevent her corpse being reanimated by the devil to have sex with other witches.

Sometime in the late 19th century, her skull and other bits were dug up and sold. Her skull ended up in the St Andrews University Museum, where it was photographed before being lost, much like the grave itself.



The skull of the Torryburn witch stolen on display in the St Andrews University Museum

Though the location of Lilias' skull remains a mystery, Fife Council archaeologist Douglas Speirs and his crew recently discovered the grave by following 19th century descriptions of the location. Speirs says it is likely some of the witch's remains may still be found beneath the stone slab.

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This Great White Shark Came Right Up To The Dock In An Australian Lake

Dec. 5, 2014, 11:04 AM 81,533
Dec. 5, 2014, 11:04 AM

businessinsider.com

Newcastle Herald

A fisherman has captured footage of a great white shark swimming very close to shore at Lake Macquarie about two hours north of Sydney.

The juvenile great white was about 2.5-metres long and was spotted circling around a wharf at Murray's Beach for about an hour on Thursday morning, the Newcastle Herald reported.

The fisherman who captured the footage said the shark was chasing bait fish in the lake. One man is seen lying on a wooden boat dock as the shark swims right underneath him. Another onlooker can be seen leaning in and splashing the water just metres from where the shark is swimming. You get a really good idea of just how big these creatures are when they're inches from you.

This article originally appeared at Business Insider Australia. Copyright 2014.

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High atop the Eiffel Tower is a small apartment built exclusively to entertain the science elite and make the rest of Paris jealous

- Gustave Eiffel's Secret Apartment

Photo by Serge Melki on Flickr | Copyright: Creative Commons

When the Eiffel Tower opened in 1889 to universal wonder and acclaim, designer Gustave Eiffel soaked up the praise, but as if that wasn't enough, it was soon revealed that he had built himself a small apartment near the top of the world wonder garnering him the envy of the Parisian elite in addition to his new fame.

Located on the third level of the tower, Eiffel's private apartment was not large, but it was cozy. In contrast to the steely industrial girders of the rest of the tower, the apartment was reported to be, "furnished in the simple style dear to scientists." The walls were covered in warm wallpaper and the furniture included soft chintzes, wooden cabinets, and even a grand piano, creating a comfortable atmosphere, perched nearly 1,000 feet in the air. Adjacent to the small apartment were some laboratory areas equipped with the experimentation gear of the day.

Once word got out about Eiffel's cozy little nest in the sky, Parisian high society turned simultaneously green with jealousy. Eiffel is said to have received a number of sky high (pun intended) offers to rent out the space even for one night. He declined them all, preferring to use the space for quiet reflection, and to entertain prestigious guests such as Thomas Edison himself who gifted Eiffel one of his newfangled phonograph machines.

Today, after being off limits for years, the apartment is on display for visitors to come and peer into. Much of the furnishings remain the same and there are a couple of rather wan looking mannequins of Eiffel and Edison. For the right type of architectural admirer Eiffel's secret apartment could inspire as much jealousy today as it did when it was built.

Edited by:Allison (Admin)YukovizDylan (Admin)

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VIDEO: Nets fan carried out of MSG without prosthetic leg

nydailynews.com

The man was identified on social media as Nets 'super fan' Jeffrey Gamblero, a conspicuous presence at Nets home games. He is usually shown dancing on the Barclays Center Jumbotron.

BY Mitch Abramson
Tuesday, December 2, 2014, 11:36 PM

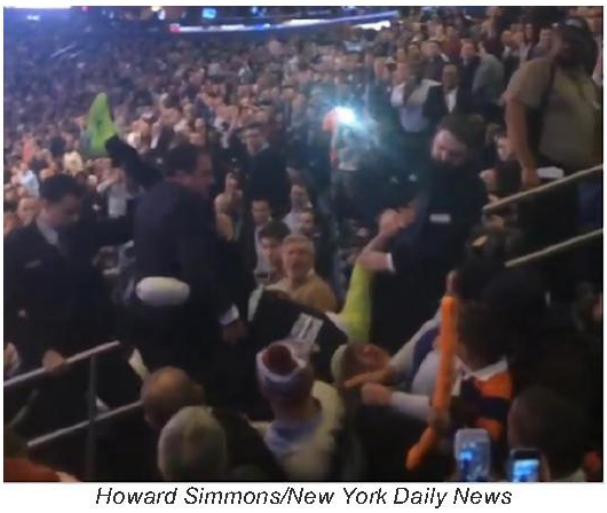
A loud Brooklyn Nets fan was carried from his MSG seats Tuesday night kicking and screaming... sort of.

There was plenty of commotion in the upper deck with around five minutes to play in the third quarter of Brooklyn's 98-93 win over the Knicks as a man with one leg was yanked from his seats - sans his prosthetic limb.

According to a pair of Garden security guards who declined to be identified, the man pulled off his prosthetic leg and hit another fan with it, inciting a ruckus in the upper deck.

"They grabbed him and pulled him out," the staffer said. "I don't know if he was arrested but they got him out of there so he didn't start a riot."

Some eyewitness accounts and social media reports dispute the story from MSG security.



Howard Simmons/New York Daily News

A screengrab of a video posted to Instagram by @jeigs shows a fan being carried out of his Garden seats - without his prosthetic leg.

"I saw what happened," said one fan, who also didn't' want to be identified. "He didn't deserve to be thrown out. He was just into the game."

The man was identified on social media as Nets "super fan" Jeffrey Gamblero, a conspicuous presence at Nets home games. He is usually shown dancing on the Barclays Center Jumbotron.

Video posted to Instagram and Twitter by @jeigs, a NYC comedian named Jesse Eigner, shows the man, decked out in Brooklyn Nets attire with neon green accents, being physically removed from the section, carried out head over heel.

Near the end of the clip, security appears to drop the Gamblero.

"I know he's a big fan," Nets forward Alan Anderson told the Daily News following the game. "I just looked up and saw what happened, that he was carried out. I don't know what caused it. I know he's a big fan for us, though."

When told that when Gamblero was carried off did not have his prosthetic limb on, Anderson looked up, incredulous.

“For real? Who took it off,” he said.

Gamblero gained a slice of notoriety when he was profiled in The New York Times last month where he was identified by another name (Jeffrey Vanchiro) and admitted that he wears neon green to gain attention.

He is a former graffiti artist and lost the lower part of his left leg in an unspecified accident. He was once indicted on felony charges for vandalizing subway stations and was sentenced to a month on Rikers Island, according to the Times story.

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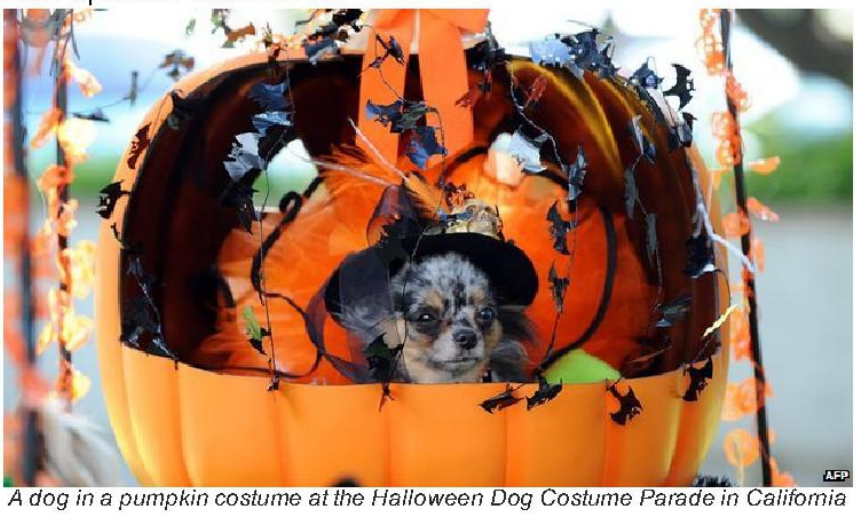
'No Halloween' for Malaysian Muslims

29 October 2014 bbc.com

Last updated at 06:39 ET



A dog in a pumpkin costume at the Halloween Dog Costume Parade in California

A Halloween dog parade: Unlikely to catch on in Malaysia

Muslims in Malaysia should not celebrate Halloween, the country's National Fatwa Council has announced.

The council, one of Malaysia's highest Islamic bodies, says Halloween is a Christian celebration of the dead and "against Islamic teachings", in a fatwa issued on its website. "Halloween is celebrated using a humorous theme mixed with horror to entertain and resist the spirit of death that influences humans... It cannot be celebrated by Muslims," it says. Instead, the council advises Muslims to remember the dead by reciting prayers and reading the Koran. There are concerns among some Muslim groups in the country that Halloween is too Western and "could wrongly influence local Muslim youths," the Malay Mail website reports. In Negeri Sembilan, western Malaysia, an international primary school has been told it must apply to the local education department to get approval for its private Halloween party, after a protest by Muslim groups, according to Free Malaysia Today.

Earlier this month the National Fatwa Council ruled that touching dogs is un-Islamic, in response to an event called "I want to touch a dog", in Bandar Utama. The event gave Muslims a chance to stroke dogs, an act traditionally seen as unclean. People who took part in the event followed religious cleansing rituals after being in contact with the dogs, Channel News Asia website reports.

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Pebbles the hamster starts blaze which destroyed home and killed two pet dogs and a chinchilla

mirror.co.uk

Getty

A mum and son have been left homeless after their pet hamster sparked a blaze which caused £20,000 of damage.

Pebbles the hamster also perished in the fire which claimed the lives of three other pets.

Luckily, Tracey Hill and her son Kae managed to flee to safety after the blaze broke out in the early hours of the morning.

Tracey had moved the restless rodent into the kitchen as he was keeping her awake by making too much noise in his wheel.

She placed Pebbles on top of the electric cooker to keep him out of reach of their three dogs, but his non-stop running meant the cage edged towards the buttons on the hob, somehow managing to turn on one of the rings.

The cage then caught fire, killing Pebbles, dogs Twiggy and Poppy and a chinchilla.

Tracey and 13-year-old Kae were alerted by their smoke alarm and finding their home quickly filling with smoke, fled in their pyjamas. They were treated for smoke inhalation.

Around £20,000 of damage was caused to the semi-detatched home in Bletchley, Bucks, and the family are now living in temporary accommodation.

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Bloody Harlan. In the 1930s, this coal-mining county in Kentucky that stretches along the West Virginia border saw some of the most intense, and most violent, labor disputes in US History. The years of violence directed against the workers who were fighting to unionize, fighting for the basic rights of a living wage and safe working conditions, earned the county the nickname of Bloody Harlan. On Black Mountain, the spirit of a murdered child haunts the hills as a reminder of the bravery and sacrifice of those violent days.

In the 1930s, mining companies held the power in the Appalachian coal fields. Often providing the only steady employment in regions that were still in many ways cut off from the outside world, the large mining concerns used their power to ruthlessly exploit the workers who pulled their wealth out of the ground. Working conditions in the mines were horribly unsafe. Cave-ins and explosions were common occurrences. Miners were forced to work long hours in the oppressively hot and dark chambers miles underground. Those that survived the mines could expect to be thrown aside with broken bodies and blackened lungs at a relatively young age, with no pension to keep him and his family going. Workers were often paid not in real money, but in company scrip, false currency that was only redeemable at company stores that sold goods at grossly inflated prices. The mining companies often held the title or the mortgages on miner's homes, and so miners saw every penny they earned and more going back to the company. Under these conditions, workers had no choice but to unionize and fight for their rights.

But the mining companies also owned the governments at the city, county, and even state level. Sheriffs, councilmen, mayors, and congressmen were all routinely on the mining companies' payroll. Attempts to unionize were met with intimidation and outright violence by local authorities. When the miners still fought back, hired thugs were brought in to terrorize the miners and their families.

The story of Headless Annie is the story of one of those miners, and of his family. The legend says that this miner was leading the unionization efforts at a mine near Black Mountain. More and more miners were coming over to his side. The miners were ready to declare a strike, and the company was furious at his success and terrified of losing their absolute power. And so they brought in "deputies" to put an end to the growing organization.

The company men waited until night, dragged the sleeping union organizer, his wife, and their young daughter out of bed. They were bound, gagged, thrown into the back of a truck and driven to the top of Black Mountain.

The company men immediately began setting about doing the work they had been paid to do. They threw the family to the ground and dragged the father over to the base of a tall tree standing by a deep ravine. One of the men produced a meat hook and a rope. He threw the hook over a high branch in the tree, letting it carry the rope with it. The father's bound hands were forced onto the hook, and he was hauled up to the top of the tree. The company men wanted him to have a good view of what they were about to do.

The horrified organizer, his body wracked with pain, watched as the men dragged his struggling wife out onto the ground. They tortured and brutalized her in front of him. taunting the man hanging from the tree, saying "This is what happens when you start a union." When they had finished, one of the company men took an axe from the truck and cut off the poor woman's head.They tossed her head off the side of the ravine. Laughing, they pushed her body down after it.

And then, while he watched helplessly, the company men did the same things to his child.

His family was dead. Murdered before his eyes. Who knows what the man was feeling as he felt himself being lowered back to the ground? We know that the company men took a last opportunity to drive home their point, saying "This is what happens when you start a union" as they used the same axe they had murdered his family with to chop off the poor man's legs. They hauled him back up into the tree and left him there, to bleed to death and as warning of the power the company held and the lengths that it would go to in order to hold on to that power.

The memory of that horrible night is seen when the spirit of the murdered child walks Black Mountain. The spirit of the young girl, dressed in a white nightgown, is often seen on the road that runs over the mountain, by the spot where the killings happened.

Some people say she will run out in front of cars, as if trying to stop the. Sometimes she is said to appear in the back seat of cars as they drive past. Sometimes she appears trying to flag down cars by the side of the road. But wherever she is seen, there is one unmistakable feature about the ghost child.

The figure of the young girl has no head.

This bloody tale from the darkest days of the battle for workers rights should remind us that the struggle for a decent living and fair treatment from the powerful has been an important part of Kentucky's history, part of a struggle that still carries on today. So if you ever pass over Black Mountain and poor Headless Annie appears to you, take it as a warning to never let it get so bad that a story like hers can happen again in the Bluegrass State, or anywhere in America.

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Harlem Hellfighters: Max Brooks Pays Tribute to World War I Heroes

Paul Thompson—War Department/National Archives
Members of the famed 369th Infantry, a.k.a. the Harlem Hellfighters, wave from deck of a ship as they arrive home from duty in World War I, during which they became the first American unit to reach the Rhine.

Fans of Max Brooks' books — World War Z, The Zombie Survival Guide, *and* The Zombie Survival Guide: Recorded Attacks — *might be surprised to learn that,* since his boyhood in Southern California, the 41-year-old author and screenwriter has been fascinated by a little-known tale of American courage, and American shame: namely, the story of the Harlem Hellfighters.

The Hellfighters, a highly decorated black infantry regiment in the U.S. Army, were the first Allied troops to reach the Rhine at the end of World War I. Back home, after the war was ended, they faced racism, discrimination and outright violence. Here, Brooks shares his thoughts on a stirring photo of American heroes returning to a land that, in many ways, had no place for them.

> *The eye of the storm. That's what comes to mind (and heart) when I see this photo of the Harlem Hellfighters. These men have already endured one maelstrom in the trenches of France, and now they're heading straight into another — in their own land. They're going home to face hypocrisy and hatred in a nation built on ideals that America has yet to live up to — and that the Hellfighters have yet to enjoy*
>
> *They're going home to a racial environment so virulent it will spark dozens of deadly race riots around the U.S. — lending the infamous "Red Summer of 1919" its name. (Race riots exploded across America in the Second World War, as well — a bitter commentary on the enduring myth of a country seamlessly united in its battle against Fascism and racial violence abroad.)*
>
> *And yet it's worth remembering that the hatred and fear that surrounded the Hellfighters — and countless other African-Americans in 1919 — were in elemental ways direct, visceral reactions to the pride justly displayed on the faces of these returning heroes. To me, the brilliant smiles of the men in this picture seem to say: "We fought to make the world safe for democracy, and we'll keep*

fighting until it's safe for us, and for ours, here in the USA."

Max Brooks is the bestselling author of *World War Z, The Zombie Survival Guide,* and *The Zombie Survival Guide: Recorded Attacks.*

The Harlem Hellfighters (Broadway Books) — illustrated by Caanan White — is available everywhere. Learn more at MaxBrooks.com.

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William Montell's book, "Ghosts along the Cumberland", is one of the most essential works of folklore and oral ghost stories in Kentucky. The book was published in 1975 and while it makes for fascinating reading, it doesn't offer much in the way of a key to find the haunted places mentioned in the book. There are a few exceptions however, and while this story doesn't offer much in the way of detail in Montell's book.... something about the story just intrigued me.
I believe that it may possibly be the saddest ghost story that I have ever heard.

On an unspecified date in the late 1800's, a young woman checked into the Harrodsburg Springs Hotel in this small Kentucky town. She used a false name, and while no one knew her true identity, they recalled that she was quite beautiful. That night, as music played in the ballroom, the girl came downstairs and began dancing with various partners. The young men of the town eagerly lined up for their turn to dance with the beautiful young girl.

The girl danced passionately and at the end of the night, her final partner realized, that to his horror, the young girl had literally died in his arms. The shocked staff and guests held a funeral for this mysterious girl and she was buried on the hotel's property. The hotel is gone now. It burned down more than fifty years ago, although the grave remains in what is now a public park. There is a metal marker over her resting places that reads... "UNKNOWN - Hallowed and Hushed be the place of the dead. Step Softly. Bow Head."

As time has passed, local residents claim that this mysterious girl still returns to the site of the hotel. She has been seen lingering in the moonlight, slowly dancing and twirling to music that only she can hear.... still recalling that tragic night so long ago.

Harrodsburg, Kentucky is located about thirty miles southwest of Lexington on Route 68 and just a few miles north of the Perryville Battlefield. The city park where the hotel once stood is located in the center of town.

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October 31, 2013by International Bellhop

First of all, the Bellhops would like to wish everyone around the world a Happy Halloween. Though not all countries, locales, and peoples of the world celebrate Halloween, all cultures have similar days and practices. No matter what culture or creed you belong to, you can celebrate a fun Halloween holiday with us.

For our Halloween feature, we were a bit undecided as to what we would go with for our article. The decision came down to 2 ideas. The first was to feature reportedly haunted destinations that you can travel to, the second was to feature a haunted hotel. The topic was unanimously decided-upon when we learned of the story of the Cecil Hotel in Los Angeles, California. This supposedly haunted, three-towered building was built in the 1920's, and has endured a tawdry past.

–the Bellhops

The Grand Entry

Haunted Cecil hotel LA

The Original Hand-Painted Sign

Cecil hotel Haunted Places

It is said that the hotel building is "cursed," and that it has been collecting victims for decades to further haunt this spooky old hotel. We won't say that we believe all of the rumors surrounding the Cecil Hotel, but we will admit that the story of this old edifice is enough to give anyone the chills.

The striking difference between this and many other haunted hotels around the world, is the amount of evil deeds that the living had performed. The hotel stopped being a hotel around the 1950s, and instead the rooms were rented as apartments by the day and week. This signaled a change in the neighborhood, known as Skid Row. The hotel became the residences for transients, drug users, and most of all… Serial Killers. The Cecil Hotel has had at least 2 serial killers call it home: Richard Ramirez, also known as the "Night Stalker;" and "Jack Unterweger," an Austrian serial killer who was released after over 2 decades in prison, only to continue to kill.

The “Curse” continued throughout the 60’s and 70’s with the building seeing a surprisingly high amount of suicides for one single address. Several “jumpers” have jumped to their deaths from the 7th and 8th floors, with one jumper also killing a pedestrian that she landed on. Because of these suicides, the 7th and 8th floors are supposedly host to the most frightening of supernatural occurrences.

[NOTE:] The following story is real, and happened only-recently. It may be disturbing; though, this Story/video has gone viral, and has yet-to-be substantiated. Regardless, it is a scary story, that only adds to the mystery of The Cecil Hotel.

Most recently, the hotel’s curse struck Elisa Lam, a 21-year-old Canadian woman who was staying at the hotel. Security cameras in the elevator showed the woman looking terrified of something that couldn’t be seen, shaking and acting abnormally, and and even trying to hide from this unseen force. Investigators say that only minutes after the video, Lam climbed up to the roof level of the building, crawled into a water tank and drowned.
The Hotel Cecil is a very mysterious place, indeed. There are many other stories, lore, and personal opinions on the strange activity and circumstances surrounding the building… Too many to count! Refurbished in 2007, the hotel now has a very elegant interior, first-class amenities, and fine dining. In fact, it has become one of downtown Los Angeles’ most luxurious and opulent destinations for lodging. Many of today’s guests check into the hotel without even knowing the sordid history of the hotel, and would never even suspect the dubious things that have take place there — if not for the nagging feeling that hits your gut when you roam the halls. The feeling shouting at you, “something is just not right.” Whether that feeling is just an instinct, a natural warning sign, or the presence of a supernatural entity, we may never know. You simply have to travel there for yourself, and make your own judgement.

8 responses to “Halloween Exclusive: Haunted Cecil Hotel”

1. Renee

   Ya, this definitely sounds like a scary place alright! I don’t think I would want to stay there…too much negativity and evil lurking around lol

2. cluttercafe

   I don’t think I’d want to stay there. Too many negative vibes! Oh and the water thing is even scarier!

3. Is anyone else wondering about why they don’t just close the damn hotel down? I mean, A DEAD BODY IN THE WATER TANK?!?!?! it’s not just creepy, it’s unsanitary. And the only people with access to the freaking roof are the staff… which leads to my conclusion that evil spirits are maybe possessing the staff as well. Read the reviews from past residents. Creepy stuff man. I don’t care what anyone says, if multiple people have committed suicide, there’s some things going on behind those walls. Also some extra residents were even killed in there own rooms. Looks like I won’t be lodging there any time soon.

4. I love this kind of story. I have stayed at the Hotel Roosevelt in Hollywood, also reported to be haunted. To me, hotel corridors are naturally spooky.

- International Bellhop

  Have stayed in too many hotels to count, they are naturally creepy.

4. Nancy

I've stayed at the Cecil Hotel …..it was nice I did not have any problems whatsoever. …..

5. firecook

Hello and Thank you for liking a post. I love Haunted things:)Happy Patty's Day;)

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In the Northeast corner of Kentucky, nestled along the Ohio River, the city of Maysville is rich in history. Once an important port on the Ohio and the heart of Kentucky's wrought iron industry, Maysville was also the birthplace of the great Rosemary Clooney. But on Market Street stands a building that holds on to the past in a very different way, the haunted Hayswood Hospital building.

Built in the late 19th Century, the Hayswood Hospital building originally served as a girls' school, before becoming a hospital around the turn of the century. The Hayswood Hospital was remodeled and expanded several times over the course of the 20th century, and operated until the early 1980s. After its closure, the building was abandoned. Several attempts were made in the 1990s and early 2000s to restore the building or the land, but the cost of cleanup was discovered to far exceed the value of the land. So the hospital remains abandoned, but that doesn't mean that nothing is happening inside.

Ever since the building was emptied in the 1980s, strange lights have been seen moving around the old building at night. Neighbors have seen a strange, pale glow coming from the windows. At times, the light will seem to move down the hallway from room to room. Other times it simply disappears and then reappears in another part of the building. It's also said that the sound of a baby crying can often be heard coming from inside the old hospital.

One of the most unsettling manifestations in the old building is the shadow figure that can be seen from the street in the last window on the third floor. The figure is described as being the size and shape of a man, but seeming to be composed more of an *absence* than a *substance*. Whatever it is seems to be something that might just disappears into. Those who see the figure usually report a feeling of being watched before looking up to see the thing in the window. Seeing the figure is also usually accompanied by a feeling of dread and the creeping sensation of coldness.

Indeed, being anywhere near the hospital is said to be something of an unpleasant experience. Feelings of dread and despair seem to accompany being near the building. Entering the building seems to make the experience even more intense. Those that have gone in to the decaying building since its closure say that they have the sensation of being followed by something that intends them harm.

Some even say that the Hayswood Hospital is casting a pall over the entire town of Maysville, and that a curse associated with the decaying building is slowly encroaching over every aspect of city life. The building has become an unwelcome, and unwelcoming, presence in the city. There are many who think the sooner the building is torn down, the better. They can only hope that when the building goes, whatever is contained within its walls goes with it.

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When you think of haunted places in St. Louis, the Lemp Mansion is usually at the top of the list. Built in the 1860s, the Victorian home has seen four suicides, one "mysterious death," and a fatal heart attack.

(Photo: LempMansion.com)

The Lemp Mansion

John Adam Lemp started the Lemp Brewery in 1840 after emigrating from Germany in 1838. Until prohibition, the Lemp Brewery controlled most of the St. Louis beer market.

When John Adam Lemp died, his son, William J. Lemp, took over the beer empire, but the good times didn't last long. In 1901, William's son Frederick died under "mysterious circumstances."

Three years later, still struck with grief over his son's death, William shot himself in his head.

William J. Lemp Jr., son of William J. and brother of Frederick, took over operations until prohibition forced the closure of Lemp Brewery in 1919. The following year William Jr.'s sister Elsa, considered St. Louis' wealthiest heiress, shot herself in the head. According to Legends of America, she was upset over turmoil in her marriage.

On June 28, 1922 Lemp Brewery, once valued at $7 million, was sold at auction for $588,500. A short time after the sale, William Jr. killed himself in the mansion's room just to the left of the entrance of the home, the same room in which his father committed suicide in 1904.

William Jr.'s son, William Lemp III, died of a heart attack in 1943.

Charles Lemp, William Jr.'s brother, lived in the Lemp Mansion for years until he committed suicide in his second-floor bedroom in May 1949.

There are also rumors William Jr. had another son out of wedlock, but was hidden from the world. People say he died in his 30s inside the mansion and buried on Lemp property with a vague marker indicating his resting place.

The home is now owned by the Pointer family, and hosts lunch, dinner, and overnight guests.

So… is it haunted? According to Legends of America, staff members have reported hearing strange voices and sounds, and seeing ghosts. One of the more popular ghost stories is about people seeing the face of a little boy peeking through the window. They say children's toys have also been found lying around the home when there haven't been any children at

the house.

They say the most paranormal activity has been reported on the stairway, in the attic, and in the basement, which they reference as the "Gates of Hell."

The Chase Park Plaza has played host to upper-class visitors since the 1920s, but it wasn't until 1979 that whispers of a prominent ghost tale started to be heard.

(Photo: Google Street View)

The Chase Park Plaza Hotel.

Here's how it goes: One night an attractive red-haired woman was seen in room 304. The occupant of that room didn't know her and called the front desk to have her removed. The woman disappeared, and the staff member who arrived at the room to escort the woman out didn't believe the man's story that she had simply vanished.

According to "Haunted St. Louis" by Troy Taylor, an unidentified movie star and his wife were staying in the same room a short time after the first incident when they saw the same woman. They say she "melted" through the door and disappeared. They reported the incident to the front desk. The clerk working that evening found it interesting two similar tales had originated from the same room.

Then there's the Los Angeles writer Taylor says also stayed in room 304. The writer saw the woman appear near his bed and vanish through a door. The next night she re-appeared, smiled, and vanished again. He too reported the incident to the front desk, and they started to piece the incidents together.

There are differing reports as to who the woman may be. Some say she was visiting a man in room 302 which somehow adjoins room 304 and she got confused. Others say she's the ghost of a woman who committed suicide on her wedding night by jumping out a window.

The building no longer stands, and that may be a good thing. Hundreds of people died at the old Gratiot Street prison at 8th and Gratiot streets, the current site of Nestle Purina's parking lot.

What is now Purina's parking lot used to be the site of the Gratiot Street Prison.

A lack of organization meant various types of prisoners roomed together in the mid-1800s. Confederate prisoners of war, union deserters, and spies co-mingled in prison cells. Guards showed no mercy, and were granted permission to shoot anyone who so much as stuck a hand out a window.

Because prisoners were crammed into rooms together, outbreaks of disease were rampant, including smallpox, measles, and typhoid. According to Taylor, the previously mentioned

(Photo: Google Street View)

author of "Haunted St. Louis," around 1,700 prisoners died in the lower level of the building. Between August 1863 and August 1864 approximately 10 percent more people died inside the prison than at the prison hospital.

In the years following the prison's closure, people claimed to see men peeking out windows as they passed the building. According to Taylor, those brave enough to go inside said they heard "cries, wails, mournful screams and the sounds of men weeping in otherwise empty rooms."

The building was demolished in 1878, but if spirits continued to reside in the building after its closure, maybe they still haunt the area?

The rich histories of Bellefontaine and Calvary cemeteries make them ripe for ghost stories. Bellefontaine Cemetery is the final resting place for Gen. William Clark, members of the Lemp family and Adolphus Busch, while Calvary Cemetery is home to the remains of Dred Scott, Tennessee Williams, and Kate Chopin. But interestingly, we were unable to find any tales connected to the tombs.

We did, however, discover that Calvary Avenue, which separates the cemeteries, is part of one of the area's most notorious ghost stories.

(Photo: Google Street View)

Calvary Avenue

Some call her "Hitchhike Annie," others call her the "vanishing hitchhiker." We'll just call her Annie.

The stories vary, but they all have one thing in common: a female hitchhiker appears on the side of the road, she's picked up, and then vanishes while riding in the car.

In one story by the aforementioned Taylor, a man picked up a blonde girl standing on a street corner and brought her to a dance. At the end of the night he asked where she lived, and he drove her home. When he pulled up to the house, he looked over and the girl had vanished.

The man got out of the car and knocked on the door of the home. An elderly lady answered and when he explained what happened, she told him the girl was her daughter who had died years earlier.

Other stories describe a girl in a white dress flagging down cars along the road, claiming her car had broken down. When she gets into the car, she gives the driver directions, and then vanishes while sitting in the front seat.

Built on the old Picker Cemetery in south St. Louis, Southside High School (now known as Roosevelt High School) has the tales buildings on former gravesites are typically associated with.

(Photo: Google Street View)

Roosevelt High School

The cemetery closed in 1901, and bodies were exhumed a decade or two later to make way for the school. During construction, workers thought the area was clear, but skeletons were uncovered from unmarked graves. According to Taylor, the cemetery kept poor records and nobody had any idea how many lost remains and tombstones were buried.

Over the years staff has heard muffled voices throughout the school building. The voices are never loud enough for anyone to understand the conversation, and no explanation has ever been found.

Maintenance staff has also reported lights turning on and off on their own on the fourth floor. Sometimes workers have noted lights up there have been turned off, and when they go back or go outside, they see the lights have inexplicably been turned back on.

Yeah, we know Jefferson City isn't St. Louis, but this place has such a rich history of hauntings we couldn't resist including it on the list.

Called "America's bloodiest 47 acres" by *Time Magazine* in 1967, the prison was the subject of an entire episode of The Travel Channel's "Ghost Adventures" last year, recreating the infamous 1954 riots and a double execution.

A prisoner is carried on a stretcher after the prison riot.

A gas chamber was used for 40 executions after it was installed in 1937. Over the summer prison historians asked for help locating the only keys to the chamber, which went missing in 2005.

A riot in 1954 killed four inmates and injured 29. Officials with the Missouri State Highway Patrol, Missouri National Guard, and police officers from Kansas City, Jefferson City, and St. Louis helped guards regain control of the prison. Four guards were injured, and the building sustained around $5 million in damage.

According to MissouriPenTours.com, rumors of hauntings, including sightings of apparitions

(Photo: Missouri State Archives)

and weird sounds, have been around for years.

Aside from "Ghost Adventures," more than 100 other paranormal investigations have taken place.

If you're interested in determining for yourself if the prison is haunted, you can book a tour.

Known as "One of the Most Haunted Small Towns in America," Alton, Illinois has quite the past. According to VisitAlton.com, the city has a history of murder, war, death, and destruction and has been featured on the Travel and Syfy channels.

Probably the most-recognized haunted location in Alton is McPike Mansion, built in 1869 by Henry Guest McPike, a former mayor of the city. He died shortly after the turn of the century, and the home was bought by a man named Paul Laichinger until his death in the 1930s.

(Photo: Flickr/Black.Doll)

McPike Mansion

The 16-room home sits on 15 acres in an area called Mt. Lookout, one of the highest points in Alton, and is on the National Register of Historic Places, despite its dilapidation.

According to AltonHauntings.com, McPike Mansion was purchased in 1994 by Sharyn and George Luedke with the hopes of restoring the home to its original luster and turning it into a bed and breakfast. Legend has it, weeks after the Luedkes bought the structure, Sharyn had a run-in with the ghost of Paul Laichinger while she was watering plants outside. She looked up at her home and saw a man wearing a striped shirt and tie standing in the window.

She later found a photograph of Laichinger wearing the same outfit the man in the window was wearing.

Alton Hauntings says over the years Sharyn has also seen a spirit she named Sarah, believed to have been a domestic servant. She has been hugged by the woman and smelled her perfume while on the third floor.

All by itself in a leafy neighborhood surrounded by homes in Chesterfield, there stands a tombstone that dates back to 1841. Not far from a cul-de-sac, you'd likely miss the gravesite

entirely if you were just driving by. But if you know to look for it, it's plain to see.

On some common ground between two lots, up the hill from Green Trails Lake off Ladue Road, you will see the final resting place of Nancy Darby."The Grave of Nancy Darby," the granite memorial reads. "Wife of Hiram Darby and daughter of Philip Morris of Warren County, Kentucky born 26th of June, 1811. Died April, 1841."

(Photo: Pat McGonigle)

The Chesterfield grave of Nancy Darby.

Those few words are all anyone knows for sure about Nancy Darby. Chesterfield historians guess Nancy Darby was part of a wagon train heading west from Kentucky to somewhere in the old west. Somehow, Nancy Darby, at the young age of 29, passed away in rolling prairie countryside that is present day Chesterfield. Some have guessed Darby died during child birth, her age would be about right. Others wonder if...it was something else. Was it something Darby did? Or a savage act of violence that did Darby in? There's no record either way.

There's only a few things we know for sure. Nancy Darby died in 1841 in what later became Chesterfield. Whoever she was with, kept on going—it is presumed.Neighborhoods went up all around west St. Louis County over the years, including several around Green Trails Lake.

(Photo: Pat McGonigle)

Green Trails Lake, where a thick mist forms. Could it be the spirit of Nancy Darby?

Developers, however, maintained respect for the final resting place of Nancy Darby. Leaving her singular headstone exactly where it stood in April of 1841, with homes on every side of it.

But there is one another thing you should know.Some nights, usually in early fall, a strange mist forms over the Village of Green Trails Lake. Neighbors say it looks too thick to be a fog. It sometimes seems to roll down from the hill to the west.It seems to come from the direction of Nancy Darby's grave.

Is Darby's spirit looking for the rest of her wagon train? Is her ghost longing to know why she was left behind?

Or... is Nancy Darby coming back?

Step inside the Fabulous Fox Theatre and you immediately see the beauty, the ornate fixtures, the magnificent 2,000-pound chandelier.

"Every time I walk in this building or give a tour I'll see something I didn't see before," explained Melody McGowan, a tour guide a the Fox. But for the first time tour guides are shining a light on things not quite as noticeable.

"The employees here we've all had some kind of experience over the years," she said. They are unexplained reoccurring circumstances. "Numerous times here toilets will flush on their own."

Spirits that apparently like this place as much as the rest of us.

"I have smelled the smell of a cigar. Normally it's right through here, it's close to this door cause I would always check and se if there's somebody in there trying to smoke," McGowan explains. "This is not your throw a sheet over you and use pulleys kind of ghost these have actually been documented now by the St. Louis paranormal research society. They actually documented like a puff of smoke. When I read that I was like alleluia I was not crazy."

They found several entities, actually.

"One of the apparition that was discovered was over there in that area and we have it documented, we have a picture of it," she said. "It shows a figure sitting in the seats."

There's something suspicious on every floor.

"We're going into the screening room so what they would do is use those projectors to show the movies to decide which they were going to show," McGowan explained. It's also where voices have been heard. "They've heard someone say Eve take a call or make a call."

Eve was the wife of William Fox who built this movie palace in 1929, the place where you come to see great performances on stage, but never know who's really watching you.

> "...Well that first week after we found out she [mom] had died, weird things were going on at my brother's place and at his work. His TV suddenly changed to QVC, our mom's favorite channel, and has been her favorite ever since it first aired on TV. Well, he couldn't change the channel or turn it off, had to unplug from the wall, yes the power button on the TV wouldn't work (tv worked just fine before and after the incident).
>
> "At work he said weird things were going on around him. Now nothing was proven but nothing like that ever happens there with whatever was going on. I can't remember but I think he said he saw something just fall over, and it was something heavy that in no way would ever just fall over on its own.
>
> "Then one late night I couldn't sleep, so went downstairs to see if I could fall asleep on the couch, listening to the crickets. I felt a cool breeze suddenly, weird because there's no air (furnace don't work).Well then what started happening next

really got my attention. One of my sons ride-on toys started to play, as if someone was pushing one of the buttons so I said "Stop it!" aloud, and it stopped, I could see though that no one was there, I was yelling at the toy for all I knew. So I tried again to go back to sleep, which everyone else was upstairs sleeping, believe me, I would know if someone had come down, the stairs squeak on each step.

"So then I started to close my eyes and again, the toy started playing again, this time it sounded like someone was pushing the button faster and faster until it was so fast I stood up, walked right next to the toy, oh man my chills are coming back as I write this, memories are powerful! Right as I walked right by the toy I felt as if I had just walked thru something, and something quite cold too! It really freaked me out and it was still playing until I got up the stairs.

"Again, no one else was downstairs but me, that I could see, and there would be no way anyone could do a prank like that. After that, I now believe in ghosts."

- Sarah Holdenried

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He was a wild child. Really wild

Euan Ferguson meets John Ssebunya
Saturday 9 October 1999

theguardian.com

He was just a child, terrified, alone and lost in the jungle of Uganda. Then a troop of monkeys began to offer him food...

The correct term for 'feral children' - those brought up by a beast, rather than a human - is, apparently, 'isolates'. It's the first vaguely fascinating thing you learn when you start digging into the more obscure libraries, trying to work out how much literature there is on the subject, and how much is credible. The second thing you learn is that all the studies are terribly worthy and wary: there's so much potential doubt floating around that every chronicler seems to have sacrificed any threat of narrative drive or excitement for the kind of leaden, trustworthy prose more normally associated with reports on the tensile strength of concrete rather than reports on My God, babies brought up by animals!

The third thing you learn has to do with geographical difference. Down the centuries, the East appears to have had all the exciting isolates. The Wolf-Child of Sekandra! The Bear-Girl of Fraumark! Closer to home, it becomes at the same time duller and more surreal. The Sheep-child of Ireland. The (I am not making this up) Duck-boy of Holland. Or, perhaps, the saddest of all, Confined Child of Pennsylvania (brought up, presumably, not by humans but by Americans). And the fourth, most vital, thing you learn is that this whole subject does deserve to be taken extremely seriously. As soon as I meet John Ssebunya, who fled into the Ugandan jungle as an infant after watching his father slaughter his mother and was then cared for, nourished and taught by a bunch of vervet monkeys, it's obvious that trauma has been inflicted, and that, no matter how easily the matter might lend itself to cheap jokes, John has an important story to tell - of the love the animals showed for him, and of his 10-year re-assimilation back into human society. A story, it turns out, which he will tell slowly, but tell well. Just as soon as I manage to get him down off the curtains...

Sorry... Sorry. It's just that, well, his rather loving adoptive family, who are across with him in Britain now, are the first to make the monkey jokes. They've had 10 years with John, since the day his 'new' father and mother, teachers Paul and Molly Wasswa, agreed to take him into their home after he had been found in the jungle by a terrified villager named Millie. His story, to be told this week in the BBC1 documentary Living Proof, has been checked by a host of experts, almost all of whom are now convinced that John is the genuine article. As am I, after John, wreathed in sweet smiles, decides to try to tell it, helped along by Paul, who translates. John has no English, and also stutters quite badly in Swahili.

He was two, or three - no one can be sure, though Paul and Molly have since given him a nominal birthday to celebrate - when his father murdered his mother, and John fled to the jungle, apparently terrified he would be next. (His father was later found hanged). For the next eight months to a year, John lived wild. He vaguely remembers the first monkeys coming up to him, after a few days, and offering him roots and nuts, sweet potatoes and kasava. They were wary at first, but after he posed no threat they befriended him within about two weeks, and taught him, he says, to travel with them, to search for food and to climb trees. 'I didn't sleep very well,' he remembers. 'Head down, and bottom in the air.. or I would climb a tree.

But I didn't sleep well.' At the time, 10 years ago, the area was in the middle of a bloody civil war, and few humans came near that patch of jungle. Until the day, many months later, when the woman Millie went further than she had meant in search of firewood, came across a small pack of monkeys and realised there was something odd about one.

'At first,' explains Paul, 'she thought there was something wrong with one of the monkeys, because it had no tail. It was only when she looked closer...she got the fright of her life.'

John was brought back to Millie's village, and for the next few weeks was the centre of attention: some good, some bad. I ask him whether he was upset at the way he was treated, for I have been told that other youngsters were cruel, and his answer is surprisingly careful and understanding.

Until now, although he smiles easily, he has been demonstrably different, answering only in monosyllables, refusing to meet anyone's eye (this behaviour was, for some extremely reputable scientists, proof of his story; when they tested it by leaving him with a group of monkeys he studiously avoided any direct eye contact with them, choosing to greet them always from the side, in classic simian behaviour). But now he pauses, then tells me, through Paul: 'They were just interested. People were interested. I don't really think bad of them for that. I was different.'

Millie and others tried to nurse him. They fed him hot food, which sent him into three days of dreadful illness. During that time, they also managed to remove tapeworms from his behind, some of them reportedly 4ft long. They saved his life, essentially: all experts are agreed he could not have survived much longer on his own at that age in that place. They then got in touch with Paul and Molly, who collected him and took him to their home, beside the orphanage they run daily for up to 1,500 visiting children.

'He was wild,' recalls Paul, smiling at John, who beams back. 'He had a lot of hair, which is apparently common in feral children. His knees had grown almost white, from walking on them. His nails had grown hugely, and curled around. He was, of course, not house-trained or anything... We still don't know, we can never know, how much time he really spent with the monkeys, but it certainly changed him. You can see it now... he's great, John, lovely, but you can see what I mean.'

And we can. When he smiles, as he does so often, he still pulls the gums wholly back. When he walks, it's a strange, lopsided gait; Paul says his running is equally odd, although he is reputedly an excellent footballer. When he lifts a bottle of water to drink, or when Gary Calton offers him his camera to take a picture, he lifts awkwardly, with the object held at first between both wrists. He is not, despite what some experts have suggested, obviously retarded; he catches nuances, listens carefully, is fit and fast and now is travelling Britain as part of the 20-strong Pearl of Africa Children's Choir, run by Paul's organisation A.F.R.I.C.A. (Association for Relief and Instruction of Children in Africa). He is, however, undoubtedly still traumatised.

What did he think now, I ask, of the monkeys? Did he remember them with... what? Confusion? Gratitude? Fear?

Paul and Molly translate, and then look up and shake their heads. 'There are some things - concepts, really - John finds it hard to understand. Emotional questions are difficult. I don't think we're getting through.' They move on to another subject, but are interrupted by John, who wants to speak. He has understood, without any trouble: he was just thinking about it. 'I am grateful, yes, I am. Because... not because of love from them, from the monkeys. But because what they did made it possible for me to be loved by other people, by humans.'

He is 13 now, or maybe 14. His birthday, his made-up birthday, is 3 July. When he grows up, he wants to work with animals: chickens, or pigs. Not monkeys? No, not monkeys, he says, and he smiles a huge smile again, and he does the one thing a monkey would never do. He winks.

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The highway to heaven? Locals claim mysterious heart-shaped pot hole is the flaming heart of Jesus

mirror.co.uk

- Nov 08, 2014 11:43
- By Emma Mountford

CEN

Is this the heart of Jesus on a Russian road?

A stretch of road has been dubbed 'the highway to heaven' after locals say a mysterious heart-shaped pot hole which appeared is the flaming heart of Jesus.

And now they want city bosses to turn it into a holy site.

Locals in the city of Petrozavodsk, in Russia's north-western Republic of Karelia, woke to find the 3ft wide 'heart' dominating the centre of a street leading out of the city.

Above it was a spray of gravel, which they claim looks like a flame from one of the symbols of Christ.

Local teacher Elena Tretiakova, 26, said: "I have lived here all my life and I swear I have never seen this hole before and it has never been here before.

"Where it came from I don't know.

"But it looks to me like it is a sign, a sign from God, to spread the message of love."

CEN

Holy heart: Is the hole a sign from above or just a puddle?

Now residents want their city council to give the road special status and to turn the flaming heart into a holy site.

Shop worker Lika Cherkasova, 45, said: "We have petitioned the authorities to rename the street Highway to Heaven and to cordon off the heart so that people can come and pray here and find inspiration.

"Many people use this road and we think it's important for them to realise they are travelling on sacred ground."

But a spokesman for the city council said: "We are aware of the so-called Heart of Jesus and the petition to change the road name.

"But it is unlikely to happen.

"Cordoning off the road is impractical and it would cost too much money to build a new one to service all the traffic, just because of a hole in the ground."

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Hero 'haunted by ghost of man he tried to saved'

Hero 'haunted by ghost of man he tried to saved'

Published: 2014 September 18 10:44:58
(1315 Views)

41-year-old Thabani Xaba says he is being haunted by the ghost of man he tried to save.

He is sure he saved customers, workers and his family from flames that could have destroyed the entire Caltex garage in Braamfontein, Johannesburg.

"The ghost comes through my bedroom door and moves until he is in my face," Thabani said.

On 1 March when he went to the garage to fill his car, Thabani tried to wrestle with a man who had grabbed a lighter and had poured petrol on himself.

The man lit the lighter and the two men caught fire.

The suicida man died but Thabani was taken to Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital, where he spent six weeks.

He still can't drive or walk properly.

"When I went to the garage to meet the owner and maybe get my medical bills paid, he said I had acted voluntarily," Thabani said.

The owner of the garage, Zanaid Ibrahim, said: "What Thabani did could have caused other people harm. It is up to my insurance company if they pay or not."

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Hey Heidi: What's under the Lemp Brewery?

Heidi Glaus, KSDK

ksdk.com

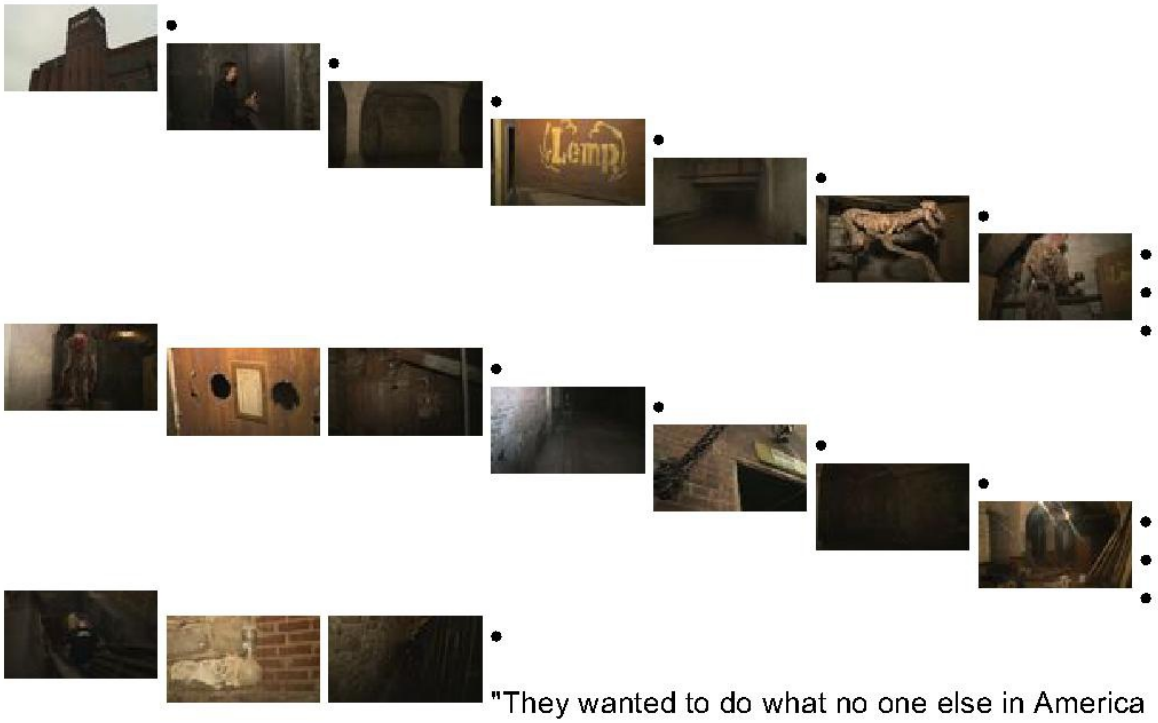
You see it from Interstate 55, an old brewery complex that covers more than 10 acres. It's that old Lemp Brewery that Rose Meyer has a question about.

ST. LOUIS - You see it from Interstate 55, an old brewery complex that covers more than 10 acres. It's that old Lemp Brewery that Rose Meyer has a question about.

She asked NewsChannel 5's Heidi Glaus if there are actually tunnels underneath the brewery.

Here's what Heidi found out: The place has more stories than square footage. A compound under lock and key, and a couple of them a man named James Kelly has the combination to.

Kelly also knows the history of the Lemp Brewery.



"They wanted to do what no one else in America was doing, which was lagers," said Kelly. It's a beer that is fermented at low temperatures. "Back in the 1800s refrigeration was not around, so the only way to do lagers was to find

something natural that would cool your beer."

The Lemp family saw the caves, and realized they were cool enough for the beer. The caves still exist underneath the building, but they aren't quite as accessible these days.

"But William Lemp, I guess in his day, he was a celebrity, and he didn't like to be harassed, so he made this pathway all the way through the caves is where he could walk from his mansion to the brewery without ever seeing a person on the upside," said Kelly.

One path though is open to the public this Halloween season, as part of a haunted house known as The Abyss.

"We tried to kind of go back to the roots of Lemp, what makes Lemp scary," said Kelly.

But let's be honest, the Lemp caves don't need much help to be creepy.

"You know we can fake a lot of stuff, but real is real and that's about as real as it gets.

The Abyss at Lemp Brewery is open every night through Saturday, plus two more nights on Nov. 7 and 8.

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September 30, 2013

hodag statue

Three things can kill a hodag: dynamite, chloroform, and lemons. If you see one, you are advised to keep any all-white bulldogs away (that's all a hodag eats) and call your local fire department or animal control. If you decide to try to kill a hodag yourself, the risk is all on you.

hodag artwork

Of course, this all won't come up unless you visit Rhinelander, a town in the "North Woods" area of Wisconsin, sixty miles from Wausau. Rhinelander is home to about 8,000 people, and has been the commercial hub of its county since it was first made accessible by railroad in 1882.1 Which is to say, it's got a bar at every corner and at least three places to buy cheese. But if you drive down Rhinelander's country highway, you might not notice the beautiful trees and houses with huge summer porches, especially if you are easily distracted by dog-eating monsters.

author with hodag statue

A trip from the local supermarket to the library means passing at least one statue of a hodag—a creature allegedly made up of a frog's head; an elephant's face (not head, *face*); short, stout legs; a spiky, dinosaur-ish back; and a long tail, topped off with one final hook-of-death.2 The creature weighs in at about 265 pounds.3 Perhaps that was a lot when the hodag was first allegedly spotted, caught, and killed, in 1893.4 Today, it's only sixty-nine pounds heavier than the average Milwaukee man.5 The most awkward part of meeting a hodag might not be the inevitable murder, but the obligatory act of consoling him about his being really, really ugly. According to legend, "the Hodag is fully aware of his upsetting appearance, and is given to frequent fits of bitter weeping."6 (Every mention of the hodag seems to refer to him in the masculine, perhaps contributing to its apparent population decline). He also smells like dead buzzards and skunks.7

One Eugene Shepard was the first person to catch and kill a hodag, blowing him up with dynamite (seems like the thing to do). He was lucky enough to round up the second hodag ever captured as well; this one had to be anesthetized and slowly killed, using chloroform. The hodag is also said to be killed instantly by lemons,8 which seems like an easier route, but apparently chloroform and dynamite were more popular at the time.9

hodag reenactment photo

Once the timber-cruiser-turned-monster-poacher had nabbed his prey, he showcased the dead hodag at the Wausau and Atigo County Fairs,10 and in his home, where he charged ten cents for people to hear the story of its capture, while the corpse lay on display in a suspiciously darkened room.11,12 The figure was actually wooden and fitted with bull's horns. To make the carving more believable, Shepard had rigged it with wires to jar the effigy into motion, while his sons growled and moaned from the next room.13 Apparently, they were convincing; visitors ran in horror. Soon, people started getting suspicious, and the Smithsonian Institute announced plans to go visit Shepard and inspect the hodag's remains. Shepard had a quick change of heart and admitted that the entire story and attendant business had been a prank.14

That wasn't the first time Shepard had pulled the wool over his neighbors' eyes. When he owned and ran a resort in

author with guitar hodag

Star Lake, near Rhinelander, he was known to carve wooden fish and rig them with wires to make them jump, tempting guests to stay longer and fish.15 When I spoke to Rhinelander's mayor, Richard Johns, about Shepard's reputation around town, he thought for a moment.

"Well," he said, "He was... quite a man in regards to the BS-ing going on."

Even though Shepard came clean about having created the hodag hoax, Rhinelander residents remain faithful to the creature: Rhinelander High School sports the hodag as its mascot, hodag merchandise can be found at any craft fair (my hodag, built out of painted rocks, is from the first annual Rhinelander Potato Fest), and every November, the town gathers in hodag attire for the Hodags on Parade soiree. Not to mention the statues: Lumberjack Hodag, Guitar-playing Hodag, Shards of Glass Hodag (the least pleasant to ride), the nearly inexplicable Camouflage Hodag, and more.

author with camo hodag

Mayor Johns, who has lived in hodag country all his life, says true believers are rare these days.

"I'm sure there's a few of them around," he said. "It has a way of coming back and going away, depending on the population."

I asked him how the hodag still impacts Rhinelander, more than a hundred years since it was declared a hoax.

"I think the hodag is something that should be taken care of in the city as long as I'm here," he says. "I promote it as much as I can."

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8 The Northwoods River News, "About Us," 2013. Retrieved September 8, 2013. http://www.rivernewsonline.com/main.asp?SectionID=13&SubSectionID=101&ArticleID=12

9 Any place with more chloroform than lemons is not a place I ever want to have tea.

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12 Shepard's house still stands on the south side of Rhinelander, according to the mayor.

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Carrie Poppy is the cohost of the investigations podcast *Oh No, Ross and Carrie*. She regularly writes and speaks on social justice, science, spirituality, faith, and claims of the paranormal. She also performs, mostly in funny things. She only has one fully functioning elbow.

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HOLMBERG: How a vampire came to haunt a Richmond cemetery

wtvr.com

RICHMOND, Va. (WTVR)–One almost century-old mausoleum in Hollywood Cemetery has long been haunted by stories of it being the home of a vampire.

So persistent are the stories, occasionally Satanists and others interested in the occult have gathered there.

Inexplicably, a broken glass was once found by a groundskeeper inside this locked and sealed mausoleum of W.W. Pool, according to the book, "Haunted Richmond."

One of stories shared about this spot that has lingered for decades is linked to one of Richmond's most fascinating and enduring legends, the 1925 collapse of the Church Hill Tunnel.

This 4,000 foot-long tunnel had been a nightmare since the deadly construction began in 1871. The soft, soapy soil consumed tunnel workers like M&Ms. Occasionally, the menacing, snakelike passage that linked Richmond to the east would kink its back and cause buildings above to tilt or sink.

Chesapeake and Ohio Railroad officials feared and hated the seemingly haunted tunnel, and breathed a collective sigh of relief when the then-amazing elevated railroad viaduct was built alongside the north bank of the James River, rendering the old, narrow gauge tunnel moot.

It was closed in 1915. But the railway decided it could be used for some traffic and began widening it in 1925.

Sure enough, on October 2, members of the large work crew were felled by the cursed tunnel. A brick fell from the arched ceiling, slamming into one of the 10 railroad flatcars pulled by steam locomotive 231.

"Watch out, she's a-comin' in!" shouted the burly 28-year-old fireman, Benjamin Mosby, according to news reports at the time.

A section above the work train collapsed, entombing engineer Tom Mason at the throttle. At least one and probably two or three of the 200 or so laborers inside also were buried alive. Record keeping on the crew wasn't detailed, and some transients – the equivalent of day laborers – were apparently in there.

Mosby, the tough guy fireman, was horribly burned, his face and teeth smashed. But he managed to crawl under the flatcars and run for it.

Imagine: The collapse had also killed the lights. Workers had to run nearly a mile, tripping over railroad ties and each other. George Raborg, a carpenter on the crew, told reporters there was pandemonium. Some workers pulled their knives, ready to cut anyone who got in their way.

According to lore from Gregory Maitland and the Virginia Ghosts & Haunting Research Society, witnesses watched a muscular, ghastly figure with flesh hanging off of it and jagged teeth rush out of the tunnel and run towards the James River. It was chased by a group of men, who saw it disappear into the mausoleum in question.

But Maitland has said the ghostly figure was, of course, fireman Ben Mosby.

According the news reports, the brave Mosby was taken to the old Grace Hospital, a building still at 401 W. Broad Street, where he died from his ghastly injuries.

Attempts were made to recover the body of the missing laborers, likely black men, but they were abandoned. Rescuers dug straight down through Jefferson Park to recover the body of the white engineer Tom Mason, the reverse lever rammed against his suffocated chest.

The laborers, Engine 231 and the ten flatcars remain buried inside the tunnel of misery.

And the mausoleum remains haunted, at least by legend.

Filed in: Mark Holmberg Reports, News

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Fairfield, CT - Witch Dunking Pond

Fairfield, CT - Witch Dunking Pond

It's no secret the early colonization of this nation was plagued with intolerance.

Puritan society was strict, closed-minded and harsh with it's warped sense of justice. The witch trials in Salem, MA have dominated the history books and American Literature as examples of the regretful behavior of the early inhabitants of the Plymouth Rock.

But it wasn't just Salem. Connecticut had it's own witch encounters and overreactions. Early incidents in Windsor, Wethersfield and scattered throughout the state resulted in executions but Fairfield, CT clearly takes the witch cake for most fascinated cases. First in 1651 Goodwife Bassett was hung then in 1653 Goodwife Mary Knapp was accused of witchcraft and having "witch marks". Of course upon examination of this simple woman any birth mark or mole was interpreted as a mark and she was hung. It's said that her accuser admitted that Knapp was innocent at her public hanging but of course, they couldn't let that get in the way of a good ole' public execution. After all, there was a crowd to please and children to entertain.

Nearly 40 years later during the height of the Salem Witch Trials, another Fairfield woman, Mercy Disbrowe was accused of witchery. While on trial the authorities needed to perform tests to determine if she truly was an accomplice of Satan. The popular witch dunking was performed. They held her down in a pond and see if she floats. Sounds perfectly scientific. Many spectators claimed she did float so she was set for her own execution. Luckily for her, cooler heads prevailed and some outside authorities stepped in after the seeing the hysteria and carnage that ensued in Salem. They had Mercy on Mercy but she wasn't as forgiving.

Legend has it several ponds and lakes in the Fairfield area are the location of the famous witch dunking. And you guessed it, Mercy haunts the hell out of everyone of them. Of course with each pond and lake the legend varies. Some claim Mercy died during the dunking, others claim it's not even Mercy but someone else the history books seemed to have forgotten. Either way, if you are taking an evening drive in Fairfield, CT and see a small lake or pond, take a look at the water. Perhaps you'll see a vengeful wet goodwife ready to lay the evil smackdown on your WASP ass.

Sources:

OLR Research Report

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House boarded up with resident inside

MINNEAPOLIS, June 8 (UPI) -- A Minneapolis man said he was preparing to leave his foreclosed home for the last time when contractors boarded up the house with him still inside.

Ted Poetsch, 53, said he was finishing packing and loading his cat into its carrier May 12 when he heard drilling coming from the frame of his front door, the Minneapolis Star Tribune reported Monday.

Poetsch, who walks with a cane, said he descended the home's stairs to find the contractors had already completed boarding up the house without making sure there was nobody inside.

City officials said Poetsch had been warned the contractors were coming that day, but they admitted boarding him up inside was a mistake that was unprecedented for the city.

Poetsch said he escaped his house-turned-prison with the help of his one-time lawyer, Josh DuBois.

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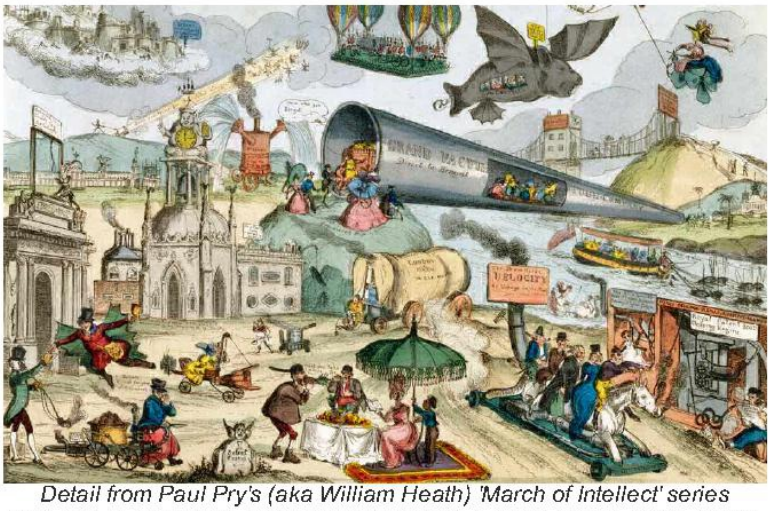
by Iwan Rhys Morus



Detail from Paul Pry's (aka William Heath) 'March of Intellect' series featuring (and lampooning) fantastical modes of trasnport c. 1828. Photo by SSPL/Getty

Detail from Paul Pry's (aka William Heath) 'March of Intellect' series featuring (and lampooning) fantastical modes of trasnport c. 1828. *Photo by SSPL/Getty*

Iwan Rhys Morus is Professor of History at Aberystwyth University in Wales and the editor of the journal History of Science. His latest book is Shocking Bodies (2011).

Before the beginning of the 19th century, the future was only rarely portrayed as a very different place from the present. The social order, like the natural order, was supposed to be static, with everything in its proper place: as it had been, so it would be. When Sir Isaac Newton thought about the future, he worried about the exact date of Armageddon, not about how his science might change the world. Even Enlightenment revolutionaries usually argued that what they were doing was restoring the proper order of things, not creating a new world order.

It was only around the beginning of the 1800s, as new attitudes towards progress, shaped by the relationship between technology and society, started coming together, that people started thinking about the future as a different place, or an undiscovered country – an idea that seems so familiar to us now that we often forget how peculiar it actually is.

Popular now

Has progress in science and technology come to a halt?
The evidence is in: there is no language instinct
Why the traditonal wedding isn't as traditional as it seems

The new technology of electricity seemed to be made for futuristic speculation. At exhibition halls in London, such as the Adelaide Gallery or the Royal Polytechnic Institution, early Victorians could marvel at electrical engines that promised to transform travel. Inventors boasted that 'half a barrel of blue vitriol [copper sulphate] and a hogshead or two of water, would send a ship from New York to Liverpool'. People went to these places to see the future made out of the present: when Edgar Allen Poe in 1844 set out to fool the New York *Sun*'s readers that a balloon flight had just made it across the Atlantic, he made sure to tell them that the equipment used had been 'put in action at the Adelaide Gallery'.

Bringing the future home, Alfred Smee, then surgeon to the Bank of England, told readers of his *Elements of Electro-Metallurgy* (1841) how they would 'enter a room by a door having finger plates of the most costly device, made by the agency of the electric fluid'. The walls would be 'covered with engravings, printed from plates originally etched by galvanism', and at dinner 'the plates may have devices given by electrotype engravings, and his salt spoons gilt by the galvanic fluid'. It was becoming impossible to talk about electricity at all without talking about the future.

A few decades earlier, there was a particular vogue for satirical prints with titles such as 'March of Intellect'. The details varied, but all such caricatures portrayed essentially the same scene. Their landscape was dotted with an assortment of futuristic machines. Steam engines shaped like horses belched black smoke as they carried passengers on their backs or dragged coaches along railroads. Street vendors roasted whole oxen on mechanical, steam-powered spits. The skies were full of balloons and dirigibles, or flying contraptions driven by furiously pedalling gentlemen (and the occasional lady). My favourite, the aforementioned 1829 work by William Heath, features an enormous pipe, labelled 'Grand Vacuum Tube Company: Direct to Bengal'. The conceit was that the hapless passengers would go in at one end and be whisked by vacuum halfway round the world to the far reaches of England's growing empire.

This was satire, of course, not prophecy. The cartoons illustrated how limited a grip on reality the promoters of technological progress actually had. But for satire to work, its target needs to be familiar to the audience. The popularity of these caricatures speaks to the sudden pervasiveness of this new way of thinking about the future as the product of technological innovation. That a common response to this way of thinking was ridicule suggests just how uncomfortable and jarring it was, nonetheless, to many people. These cartoons might look like prehistoric steampunk from our lofty 21st century vantage point, but it's worth remembering that early 19th century satirists did not really have to tweak reality that much to generate these fantasies.

Even the baroque-seeming vacuum-powered propulsion system had a basis in contemporary plans for pneumatic railways that worked along such principles. This seems to be the case for futuristic speculation more generally. All our futures tend to be made up out of bits and pieces of our present.

Daily Weekly

For the Victorians, the future, as *terra incognita*, was ripe for exploration (and colonisation). For someone like me – who grew up reading the science fiction of Robert Heinlein and watching *Star Trek* – this makes looking at how the Victorians imagined us today just as interesting as looking at the way our imagined futures work now. Just as they invented the future, the Victorians also invented the way we continue to talk about the future. Their prophets created stories about the world to come that blended technoscientific fact with fiction. When we listen to Elon Musk describing his hyperloop high-speed transportation system, or his plans to colonise Mars, we're listening to a view of the future put together according to a Victorian rulebook. Built into this 'futurism' is the Victorian discovery that

societies and their technologies evolve together: from this perspective, technology just *is* social progress.

The assumption was plainly shared by everyone around the table when, in November 1889, the Marquess of Salisbury, the Conservative prime minister of Great Britain, stood up at the Institution of Electrical Engineers' annual dinner to deliver a speech. He set out a blueprint for an electrical future that pictured technological and social transformation hand in hand. He reminded his fellow banqueteers how the telegraph had already changed the world by working on 'the moral and intellectual nature and action of mankind'. By making global communication immediate, the telegraph had made everyone part of the global power game. It had 'assembled all mankind upon one great plane, where they can see everything that is done, and hear everything that is said, and judge of every policy that is pursued at the very moment those events take place'. Styling the telegraph as the great leveller was quite common among the Victorians, though it's particularly interesting to see it echoed by a Tory prime minister.

Salisbury's electrical future went further than that, though. He argued that the spread of electrical power systems would profoundly transform the way people lived and worked, just as massive urbanisation was the result of steam technology. Using steam industrially meant overcrowded towns and big factories, because steam power couldn't be transmitted over a distance, he said. Electric power, on the other hand, would be decentred. So the future would 'see men and women able to pursue in their own houses many industries which now require the aggregation of the factory'. It would generate 'that unity, that integrity of the family, upon which rests the moral hopes of our race, and the strength of the community to which we belong'. What Salisbury's electrical future really promised was a return to the past. But one combining the virtues of an agrarian moral economy with those of an industrial world.

Victorians couldn't talk about electricity without invoking its transformative future. Even when the satirical magazine *Punch* poked fun at the pretensions of electrical futurists, its satire was a rather gentle affair compared with the vitriol such prophecies provoked half a century earlier. In 'The Coming Force', the cartoonist drew the electric fairy on a chariot, hovering over the electric light and surrounded by the domestic luxuries that electricity would soon deliver – frozen meat from Australia revived by electricity, or Christmas turkeys hatched by electric heat. Banished into the outer darkness were chimney sweeps and gas lighters. This was satire that endorsed the underlying message: the future was what electricity was about, and it was a future that would transform life at every level.

When the inventor Nikola Tesla appeared on stage in London or New York, carrying glass tubes glowing with electric light in his hands, he was giving his audiences a glimpse of that future. The stories that Tesla weaved around his construction of the Wardenclyffe Tower in New York, and its (ultimately failed) project to transmit power through the Earth, also worked by offering seductive visions of the future. At Wardenclyffe, Tesla built giant induction coils inside a 187 ft tower (his original plan was that it reach 600 ft) with the aim of producing a standing wave of electromagnetic energy inside the Earth, so that power could then be picked up at any point along the planet's surface. Selling the idea to investors (primarily the tycoon J P Morgan) and the public meant offering them the future that was embodied in the tower's

steel girders and copper coils.

> the power of the sales pitch rested on juxtaposing the fantastic with the everyday: Martians and better crop yields in the same package

Tesla was very good at selling futures in this way. Like most successful Victorian inventor-entrepreneurs he realised that, in order to sell his inventions, he needed to give his future customers tantalising glimpses of the world those inventions would inhabit. In a lecture to the Commercial Club in Chicago in 1899, Tesla submitted his plans to transmit power, send radio messages to Mars, and use electricity to produce fertiliser from the atmosphere almost all in one breath. The power of the sales pitch rested on this juxtaposition of the fantastic with the everyday (as it often still does): Martians and better crop yields both in the same package.

The same year he told the Chicago *Times-Herald*: 'Signalling to Mars? I have apparatus which can accomplish it beyond any question. If I should wish to send a signal to that planet I could be perfectly certain that the electrical effects would be thrown exactly where I desire to have them.' More than that, 'I have an instrument by which I can receive with precision any signal that might be made to this world from Mars.' Tesla was jumping on the bandwagon, set rolling four years earlier by the astronomer Percival Lowell's study of 'canals' criss-crossing the red planet – the same wagon that H G Wells leapt upon with *The War of the Worlds* in 1897.

A stunning vision of the possibilities of humanity's expansion into space

That both the mighty Tesla and Wells (then a struggling writer of scientific romances) saw fit to exploit spectacular new scientific ideas such as Lowell's Martian canals alerts us to just how confluent were future fact and future fiction in the Victorian age. Another example of this sort of slippage is offered by the story of the telectroscope and Mark Twain. The telectroscope was supposed to be a device that could transmit vision in the same way that the telephone transmitted sound. Rumours that such a device had been invented first appeared in the New York *Sun* in 1877, just months after Alexander Graham Bell's telephone had been triumphantly unveiled at the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition. Then, in 1879, a French inventor, Constantin Senlecq, published a description of *le télectroscope*. A year after that, *Scientific American* printed a number of articles on 'seeing by electricity'. And in 1897, another entrepreneur inventor, the Polish Jan Szczepanik, took out a patent for a device that transmitted vision by electricity.

Transatlantic mysteries: viewers gaze through artist Paul St George's Telectroscope on London's South Bank, ostensibly connected to Brooklyn, New York and 'seeing by electricity', May 2008. *Photo courtesy Ryan Baumann/Flickr*

That was what prompted Twain to write his story 'From the 'London Times' of 1904', published in *Century Magazine* in 1898 and written in journalistic style as a dispatch from the future. The telectroscope was central to the tale – as the instigator, and the agent, for solving a murder. The story starts with an argument between Szczepanik and a Lieutenant Clayton about the invention's utility, moves on to the inventor's murder, Clayton's trial and conviction for the crime, and ends with his pardon, when the telectroscope reveals Szczepanik alive and

Transatlantic mysteries: viewers gaze through artist Paul St George's Telectroscope on London's South Bank, ostensibly connected to Brooklyn, New York and 'seeing by electricity', May 2008. Photo courtesy Ryan Baumann/Flickr

well on another continent.

To put it all together and lend his tale the appropriate air of realism, Twain drew heavily on the various competing accounts that circulated around the telectroscope. In short, Twain had produced a fiction about a fiction. No device like a telectroscope was ever constructed (though it now features in prehistories of the television). The speculations on which Twain based his story had as little – or as much – basis in any actual instrument as the story itself. Facts and fictions were feeding on each other, just as they do now.

In some respects, Wells's reputation as a writer depended on his ability to exploit this continual slippage in talking about the future. Without his status as an author of scientific romances, his first foray into non-fiction, *Anticipations of the Reaction of Mechanical and Scientific Progress upon Human Life and Thought* (1901), would have been impossible. *Anticipations*, like his novel *The Shape of Things to Come* (1933), quite deliberately melded social and technological progress, affirming what Victorian promoters of the cult of progress understood already: that the future's technology and its culture were one.

It's easy to pick and choose when reading this sort of future history from the privileged vantage point of now – to celebrate the predictive hits and snigger at the misses (Wells thought air travel would never catch on, for example); but what's still striking throughout these books is Wells's insistence that particular technologies (such as the railways) generated particular sorts of society, and that when those technologies were replaced (as railways would be by what he called the 'motor truck' and the 'motor carriage'), society would need replacing also.

It makes sense to read much contemporary futurism in this way too: as a new efflorescence of this Victorian tradition. Until a few years ago, I would have said that this way of using technology to imagine the future was irrecoverably dead, since it depended on our inheritance of a Victorian optimism, expressed as faith in progress and improvement as realisable individual and collective goals. That optimism was still there in the science fiction of Heinlein, Isaac Asimov and Arthur C Clarke, but it fizzled out in the 1960s and '70s. More recently, we've been watching the future in the deadly *Terminator* franchise, rather than in hopeful film such as *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). The coupling of technological progress and social evolution that the Victorians inaugurated and took for granted no longer seemed appealing.

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Yet there does now seem to be a change in the air, and Musk's bravura faith in the capacity of free enterprise to deliver what the state behemoth of NASA couldn't is just one example. In 2011, the science fiction author Neal Stephenson set up Project Hieroglyph as part of an ambitious campaign to transform the genre and reignite 'the iconic and optimistic visions of the golden age of science fiction'. Stephenson laments our 'inability as a society to execute on the big stuff' and suggests that science fiction has the capacity to generate an 'overarching narrative' that might offer scientists and engineers across the board a shared vision of the future they want to generate. I'm struck by the underlying assumption that producers of scientific fact and fiction alike should be engaged in a common project of technological future-making. Tesla and Wells would have approved.

Indeed, without them and their kind, we would not dream up the sorts of futures we dream up now. Telling stories about innovation was an indispensable part of Victorian inventor-entrepreneurs' strategies for making their technologies real. Edison sold telegraphs and phonographs and cinematographs by painting futures in which these technologies made sense. These stories – and the slippage between the present reality and the imagined future that they represented – were critical in providing Victorians with a road map for progress.

The proliferation of futuristic fiction at the end of the 19th century, like Stephenson's 'golden age of science fiction' a century later, also coincided with a particular kind of progressive optimism built around new science. That optimism depends on our buying a very particular story – a story the Victorians invented – about the entanglements of culture and technology and where that takes us. It's a story we might want to think twice about, second time round.

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Human remains found in remote Alaska, troopers say

ANCHORAGE, Alaska – foxnews.com

Alaska State Troopers say human remains have been found in the North Pole area.

The discovery was reported Sunday.

Troopers say the remains were recovered.

The remains are being sent to the state medical examiner's office to determine the cause of death and positive identification.

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If you need 3,000 spiders immediately, you're in luck

By B.G. Henne avclub.com

What's better than having a tarantula? Most of us would answer "being completely free of tarantulas," but somebody on Facebook is hoping the answer is "three thousand tarantulas." *The Daily Dot* has posted a screenshot of the advertisement, which is only for people "serious about wanting a LOT of spiders," so all of you casual spider investors can shove off, thanks.

While it could easily be hoax, the ad raises more questions than it answers. Who abandoned 3,000 tarantulas in the first place? Are these organically grown, fair-trade spiders? What's the layaway policy? Are there any radioactive ones? Do they taste good with mustard? And, most importantly, why isn't this on Craigslist?

[redacted]

Need to get rid of/ sell ASAP -- Tarantulas . There are probably 3 thousand or more. Many are babies but many many are adults. They range from smaller than your pinky nail to big as your palm. They are all in individual containers. Some are cheap ones (5-10 each) , some are worth $300 or more for just one spider. I have no idea what they are called or sex of them. Looking to get rid of the whole lot for one price. The person who owned them is away and so the spiders need to go now or they will end up dieing of starvation. Also have a huge Rubbermaid container of Madagascar roaches and some kind of worms they eat that all also need to go too. The person who owned these was raising them, breeding them and selling them. These would make for a great investment or add to someones collection.... Here are some of the pictuers showing how many and some pics of the spiders. the pictures don't really show how many are there. If you are serious about wanting A LOT of spiders please let me know and we can talk more. They are located in [redacted]

OH AND you will have to load all these yourself as I WONT touch any of them. (do not like spiders !!)

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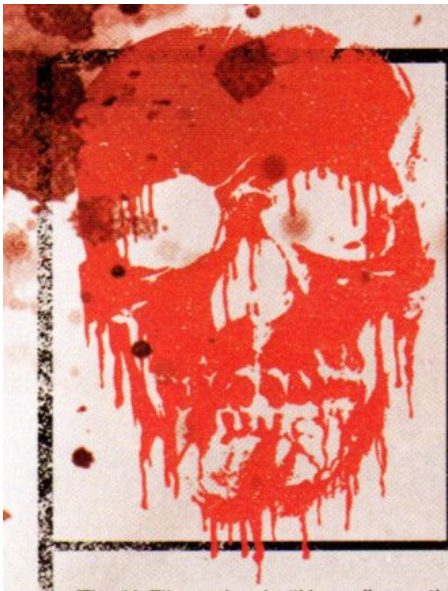

CORONER'S REPORT

WEIRD STATS & MORBID FACTS

CASE NO. 150

The X-Files episode "Home" was the first TV episode to ever be given the TV-MA (mature audiences) rating in the US.

On August 12 of this year, a hospital in Melbourne, Australia mistakenly faxed death notices to the family doctors of 200 of its patients. In actuality, the patients had been discharged from the hospital the previous day.

Director Takashi Miike has revealed that the substance used in the introduction to *Ichi the Killer* – in which the film's title rises out of a puddle of seminal fluid – is in fact real semen.

In order to achieve the strange, dream-like photography in Carl Dreyer's *Vampyr*, a thin gauze was put in front of the lens as a filter.

It is 25 minutes into the film *Ravenous* before Guy Pearce's character, the main protagonist who is in virtually every scene, utters his first full sentence.

Prior to her death at age twelve, *Poltergeist* star Heather O'Rourke claimed to have watched the movie a dozen times but the sequel only once because she "didn't think it was too great."

Director Tod Browning admitted that, were it not for his death, Lon Chaney – rather than Bela Lugosi – would have been his choice for the starring role in 1931's *Dracula*.

Marcus Peter Volke, a 28-year-old chef in Brisbane, Australia is believed to have killed and eaten parts of his transgender girlfriend, before fatally slicing his own throat while fleeing police, this past October.

In 1956, nine year-old Stewart Cohen died of a ruptured artery at a double bill of *The Quatermass Xperiment* and *The Black Sleep*, only to be immortalized in the *Guinness Book of World Records* as the only known case of someone literally dying of fright at a horror film.

David Lynch has cited the O.J. Simpson trial as a major influence during the writing of *Lost Highway*, which deals with a man who killed his wife. Lynch cast Robert Blake to play the Mystery Man in the film; years later, in 2001, Blake would be put on trial for killing his own wife.

A Nightmare on Elm Street director Wes Craven created Freddy Krueger's appearance from an incident of his youth, when he saw a hobo staring at him through his window one day when he was ten years old.

In the 1950s, *Night of the Werewolf* director Paul Naschy penned several Western dime novels, published under the pseudonym Jack Mills.

The *Huffington Post* reported that a Chinese man almost died recently when he was infested with tapeworms after they got into his bloodstream and spread throughout his entire body, due to eating contaminated sashimi.

MONSTRO BIZARRO

Although generally dismissed as mere urban legends, there are numerous eyewitness reports that claim upright, bipedal goat-like creatures lurk on the edges of our cities. Dubbed "goatmen," these cryptids are described as either hairy humanoids with a goat-like head, or horned men with fur and hooves, often bent on frightening or even killing those who encounter them. With an abundance of shocking tales and reports, author and paranormal researcher J. Nathan Couch sets out to explore the phenomenon in his new self-published book, *Goatman: Flesh or Folklore?* In it, Couch recounts famous cases, including that of the Pope Lick Monster, the Beast of Billiwhack, the Lake Worth Monster, and the Maryland Goatman, along with a horde of other hooved horrors, as he attempts to separate fact from folklore.

LYLE BLACKBURN

MORE MONSTRO BIZARRO AT RUE-MORGUE.COM

Charles Paul Brown, a Scottsdale preacher who believed he would live forever, is dead at age 79. But his message lives on.

Ryan Van Velzer , The Republic | azcentral.com

A community of immortals

Charles Paul Brown wasn't supposed to die.

He was supposed to live forever, along with disciples in a half-dozen countries all over the world who embraced his philosophy of physical immortality.

But Brown died in October of complications from Parkinson's and heart disease, according to the website for People Unlimited, the group he began in Scottsdale more than 30 years ago. He was 79.

The community of immortals he founded is left without its figurehead — and with an apparent contradiction to reconcile. Yet its leaders continue to conduct business as usual, collecting thousands of dollars per year in fees for monthly meetings, retreats and coaching that they say lead to the secret to unlimited life.

His wife, Bernadeane "Bernie" Brown, and business partner James Strole preach Brown's evangel at weekly meetings in a converted office at a north Scottsdale business complex near Bell Road and 94th Street. Adherents watch on a live stream in countries as far away as Israel and New Zealand.

Communications director Joe Bardin, in an e-mail, confirmed Brown's death. He said Bernie Brown and Strole tamped down the immortality rhetoric in recent years, but did not directly address whether Brown's death otherwise affected the group's messages or marketing thrusts.

"While the ideas of immortality burned brightly within him, the living of it often eluded him," Bardin wrote. "Too much stress and not enough exercise undoubtedly contributed to the heart disease and Parkinson's from which he suffered.

“While the ideas of immortality burned brightly within (Charles Paul Brown), the living of it often eluded him.”

Joe Bardin, People Unlimited

"…To honor his memory, we re-dedicate ourselves to living the life he envisioned and so compellingly spoke of to so many — a life free of death," Bardin's e-mail said.

The group, which has dwindled in membership over the decades, has for years preached immortality, urging adherants to leave behind "the Cult of Death."

Rick Ross, executive director and founder of the Cult Education Institute, a New Jersey group that tracks information about groups it considers to be cults, predicted little will change because of Brown's death. The leadership will find a loophole, a reason why Brown was not actually immortal, Ross said.

"In my opinion, they fit the criteria that establishes what I call the nucleus of a destructive cult," Ross said.

A cellular awakening

Like any origin story, it's difficult to decipher myth from reality.

In 1959, while studying to become a gospel preacher, Brown had an experience. Some say his body glowed. Others such as Lynne Ericksson, a former member who left 20 years ago, said Brown had a powerful vision with Bible verses flashing before his eyes, each verse supporting the idea that physical immortality was real.

Brown said the event was a "cellular awakening." Later, he would describe it as "a piercing through to the core of the cells and atoms of the body, which awaken the DNA," according to an article he wrote for *Living Unlimited*, a magazine published by People Unlimited.

The experience left him bedridden for three months, Ericksson said. But Brown arose physically immortal, or so he believed, she said.

For the next five decades, Brown preached about immortality alongside Bernadeane and later, their friend and business partner, Strole, Ericksson said.

(Photo: Lynne Ericksson)

(Left to right) James Strole, Bernadeane “Bernie” Brown and Charles Paul Brown in the mid-1990s.

Together, they told people that to live forever they must "dethrone death," accept immortality into their DNA and share it with those around them.

In 1982, Brown began the Eternal Flame Foundation to share his immortality through "cellular intercourse" — the idea that by communicating and being in close proximity to him, you, too, could be immortal.

The organization has changed its name several times since the early 1980s; it has been known as the Flame Foundation, People Forever and CBJ (Charles, Bernie and James). It was incorporated as a Scottsdale-based business in 1996 as People Unlimited Inc. under the ownership of Bernie Brown and Strole, alongside its non-profit, People Unlimited Charities.

They preached immortal living in 26 countries on four continents, according to Brown's obituary on the group's website. They appeared in print, spoke on Larry King and even became the focus of a 20/20 investigation. But a wave of articles written in the mid '90s

swayed public opinion against the group motivating Brown, Bernie and Strole to step out of the limelight. For more than a decade, the group has operated away from public scrutiny, media and groups that track cult movements.

The group has claimed members in England, Israel, Australia, New Zealand, Venezuela, Argentina and Switzerland. At one time, the organization had 30,000 people in more than 18 countries on its mailing list, according to a 1994 *Phoenix Gazette* article.

But a schism formed within the group and membership shrank between '94 and '95 when the relationship between Brown, Bernie and Strole hit a rough patch, Ericksson said.

Around the same time, Donald Leon, a lawyer and prominent figure within the immortal community, died. Membership never fully recovered.

Today, the group is smaller but still counts around 130 members in Scottsdale and more throughout the world.

Walking the path of immortality

(Photo: Lynne Ericksson)

Bernadeane “Bernie” Brown photographed in the 1990s.

Bernie Brown's wrinkled hands quiver with a nervous excitement as she speaks. Her voice ebbs and flows with the tide of her passion. Behind her, Strole sits on stage in a tuxedo, nodding his head in agreement and waiting to speak.

"You don't have to be old," Bernie whispers to the audience in a video uploaded on the People Unlimited YouTube page on Sept. 29, 2014.

Her brunette hair and blonde highlights ripple with the nodding of her head. Her voice intones, shrill and sharp. She is 77 years old. She looks forward to being 100, she says.

"We have to bring about a feeling in our gut it's natural to live. It's what should be," she said. "It hasn't been OK to be alive. It hasn't been OK to say that you're going to be here forever. Why not say it?"

The crowd explodes in applause. Much like an evangelist tent revival, People Unlimited members stand, shout and clap to encourage the speakers.

Through the decades, the language has changed, but at its roots, the group's message remains the same.

In a *Living Unlimited* article printed in the 1990s, Bernie Brown wrote: "I am physically

immortal. I have something to say about whether or not I live or die. And you do too. I have stepped off death row, never to go back there again."

But living immortal is a double-edged sword. In order to truly be immortal, you have to leave behind the rest of society, what Bernie calls "the Cult of Death."

“There are many cults on this planet, but the largest one is the cult of death.”

Bernadeane Brown, People Unlimited

"There are many cults on this planet, but the largest one is the cult of death," Bernie Brown wrote in a 1994 article in *Forever Alive*, another one of the group's magazines. "It's composed of human beings who have made an agreement to die. All down through history, this agreement has been the strongest force at work on the planet."

These days, Strole and Bernie have traded Brown's gospel-style preaching for self-help, power-of-positive-thinking motivational speeches, all of which are made up on the spot, Bardin said. Instead of overtly stating they are physically immortal, they emphasize that they are trying to be physically immortal and admit that is not always possible, Bardin said.

"What we're saying is you have the potential to be unlimited, which means unlimited lifespan, unlimited creativity, unlimited prosperity, and we're really interested in exploring the frontiers of that. That's what we're about. So there is a huge amount of personal accountability that is involved," Bardin said.

Strole and Bernie Brown declined to comment for this story.

The price of immortality

A 1992-1993 audit of the group, when it was known as the Flame Foundation, showed the three founders each received salaries totaling $431,597, with $1.12 million in earnings from event revenue, fund-raising and sales of materials, according to the *Phoenix Gazette*.

The most current information available for People Unlimited Charities, the non-profit arm, shows a net income of $61,679 between 2010 and 2012, some of which has gone to support Tumbleweed Center for Youth Development, Bardin said. People Unlimited Inc., the business, is not required to release financial records.

A People Unlimited event in the 1990s.

Bardin said that members pay to learn to overcome limitations in their lives. A $245 monthly fee covers two weekly meetings and one weekend meeting, he said.

Members also pay to go on three-day intensive retreats, which cost another $150 to $200 on average as well as additional fees to Strole and Bernie for "life coaching," said Sylvie Imelda Shene, who took an interest in the group but declined membership around 2010.

In the six years that John Lloyd was part of the organization, he said he spent more than

(Photo: Lynne Ericksson)

$14,000 learning how to be immortal in addition to out-of-pocket costs when picking up the tab for golf outings and dinners.

"I recall when my accountant saw how much I was giving CBJ (Charles, Bernie and James) he called because he thought it was an error or I was going out of my mind," he said. "Honestly, I feel like a damn fool for falling for it all."

The group's non-profit status designates it as an interfaith organization, but Bardin said People Unlimited is a business.

“My experience with People Unlimited is they are not stockpiling weapons, they are not mixing poison Kool-Aid, but what they do is exploit people. ”

Rick Ross, Cult Education Institute

"We don't see ourselves as a religion," he said. "People Unlimited is a company. Maybe it would be better if more people who were doing good things in the world were paid for them rather than guys that can dunk a ball really well or sing pop songs."

Ross, the cult researcher, said that People Unlimited acts like a business but functions as a religion.

"It is a religion in that it is a subjective belief system not a scientific reality," Ross said. "My experience with People Unlimited is they are not stockpiling weapons, they are not mixing poison Kool-Aid, but what they do is exploit people. They exploit people financially and they create a great deal of stress."

Together forever

Lynne Ericksson was married to Donald Leon until his death on Dec. 27, 1993.

Encouraged by a friend, the couple went to their first meeting and became energized by the charisma and vitality of the group, Ericksson said.

Leon, a psychologist, spiritual medium and American Indian shaman, enjoyed learning belief systems. He used to tell Ericksson that the only way to learn a new set of beliefs was to immerse yourself.

So that's what they did.

By 1987, they fully committed to what was then called the Flame Foundation. They attended weekly meetings, helped pay for events and became close to Brown, Bernie and Strole.

Ericksson took on the role of photographer while Leon became the unofficial translator. They listened to Brown preach, and afterward, Leon would boil down Brown's message into a conversational, more palatable message for audiences, she said.

As the years wore on, Leon persuaded Brown, Bernie and Strole that their message needed to get out to the world. So they began to travel. First to England, Ireland, Amsterdam and Italy. Later, branching out to places as far away as Argentina, and Israel — home of the group's largest following outside the U.S.

Once, while travelling through Israel, Leon and Ericksson left the group to go sightseeing, but didn't tell anyone. Upon their return, Bernie scolded the couple in public for breaking away from the group, Ericksson said.

"That's not why we're here," Ericksson recalled Bernie saying to her.

Group members called this practice a "touch." Ross says public shaming is a thought-reform technique used to prevent dissent, shut down critical thinking and conform an individual to the group's ideology.

However, the "touch" was not always negative, Ericksson said. At times, it could help people overcome inhibitions. Ericksson once made a comment that she didn't like kids. Bernie, who had two kids of her own with Brown, felt she had to break that down.

"Bernie had a hissing fit. She was screaming at me. It shakes you. It cracks your persona. It's like getting hit in the face with a bucket of ice water. I had to think about it," Ericksson said. "Kids are my favorite thing in life now."

A death in the family

Leon first became sick at the 1993 annual convergence where members from all over the world gathered at a hotel in Scottsdale for a week-long celebration that included meetings, raves, drinking and parties.

"We had the best parties that existed in the whole wide world," Ericksson said. "Part of the reason they were so great was because of the connection with everyone."

At the party, Leon nearly collapsed.

The couple consulted several doctors looking for alternative health treatments without knowing what was wrong with Leon.

At the end of August, Ericksson took him to a naturopathic doctor, but Leon was so ill he couldn't even get out of the car. The doctor came outside, gave Leon a shot of B vitamins and asked if he'd ever been tested for cancer.

By the time Leon received a diagnosis, the cancer had spread through his entire body.

The immortal community rallied around Leon. They offered condolences. They hugged. They

spent time with Leon, Ericksson said.

"If you're still breathing, they are on your side," she said. "They did that with Chuck (Charles Paul Brown's nickname). People visited him in the nursing home all the time."

But Leon died. Just like Brown would die two decades later.

"He (Leon) believed up until the last second that he was going to be fine," Ericksson said. "It was one of my regrets. That when he still lucid, we would have had a different conversation if we had accepted that."

In death, the community turned their backs on Leon, she said. They said he wasn't committed to immortality. That he never really "got it," Ericksson said. Within a year, Ericksson left the community for good.

Lloyd, a former member, described Leon's death as a "shot in the bowel to my immortality."

"Anyone who died, they came up with a reason why. They would say you didn't have full commitment to CBJ (Charles, Paul and Bernie). They basically said that Donald was not fully committed to them, and that's like saying St. Peter wasn't fully committed to Jesus," Lloyd said.

Ross, who says he receives at least one complaint a year about the community for its practices, said that the message at the time was "by acknowledging death, he (Leon) gave place to death and dying."

"The spin is that he is dying and somehow it's his fault, like most groups called cults there can never be anything wrong with the group's basic assumptions. It's your fault if something is going wrong," Ross said.

And now, at 79 years old, Charles Paul Brown is also dead.

(Photo: Lynne Ericksson)

Charles Paul Brown photographed in the 1990s.

Many current and former members would describe Brown as the heart and soul of the group, Ericksson said.

Lloyd described Brown as an inspiration, a friend and mentor.

"It is impossible to put into words what Chuck meant to so many people. For me, he was an inspiration who awakened the feeling of boundless living without any limitations. Some of the most fond memories of my life will always be the times we spent together sharing our deepest and most profound thoughts," he wrote in a Facebook post.

Others in a Facebook thread on Brown's death described him as "amazing," and "remarkable."

Bardin called Brown's demise a "tragic loss" for the community.

"Before longevity had even entered the mainstream jargon, Charles was declaring that the time is now to shrug off our old deathist ways and embrace a new and unlimited potential for the human species," he said.

In the few years before Brown's demise as his health declined in his battle with Parkinson's disease, Bernie and Strole replaced Brown as the leaders of the organization, but continued to care for Brown privately.

Many more within the community rallied around him in the same way they had rallied around Leon, Ericksson said.

In September, Ericksson went to see Brown for the first time in many years, she said.

Brown lay in bed asleep. He looked weak. Gaunt.

He awoke pleased to see Ericksson.

"Hi, sweetheart," he said.

They exchanged stories about old friends. Brown told Ericksson he loved her. She replied in kind.

Brown fell back asleep. This time, he wouldn't rise from his bed an immortal.

"Chuck and Donald absolutely adored each other. I'm so glad they are together now. I'm sure they are having a grand old time," Ericksson said.

People Unlimited leaders (from left) James Strole, Bernadeane “Bernie” Brown and Charles Paul Brown in the 1990s. (Photo: Lynne Ericksson)
(Left to right) James Strole, Bernadeane “Bernie” Brown and Charles Paul Brown in the mid-1990s. (Photo: Lynne Ericksson)

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Residents of Harrison try to fight their reputation as the small town with the most hate groups in America

December 10, 2014 5:00AM ET
by Timothy Bella @TimBella

Harrison, Arkansas billboard

It's impossible to have a conversation about race in the town of Harrison, Arkansas, without talking about the yellow billboard.
Timothy Bella

Thomas Robb lives 15 miles from downtown Harrison, Arkansas, past churches with signs speaking of God's righteousness, a goat farm and a slew of rusted trailer homes. His home is a collection of nondescript white cottages that includes an office and a meeting place for the Christian Revival Center, where he serves as pastor. The buildings stretch across several acres — but don't call the property a compound.

"It's my home, not a compound," Robb says, correcting a reporter with a smile. "The word 'compound' has such a negative connotation."

Robb and his wife moved to the area 43 years ago from Tucson, Arizona: "You could see the handwriting on the wall of Arizona being a dumping ground for illegal aliens." The stronger morals of people in Arkansas, he says, made the state a more attractive home for his Thomas Robb Ministries and the Christian Revival Center, which espouse a white-supremacist, "Christian-identity" theology. For the last 25 years, he's also been the national director of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, the group founded by prominent Klan leader and former Louisiana politician David Duke. In that role, Robb has attempted to advance the white-nationalist movement by portraying the Klan, in the words of one journalist, as more "gentle, upbeat and friendly" — an approach that's sometimes frowned upon by other Klan members for being too mainstream.

Despite living in the town of Zinc, population 104, Robb has his mailing address in Harrison. That's become a point of contention for the Harrison Community Task Force on Race Relations, which is trying to turn around Harrison's reputation as a racist community. While Harrison has been included in Norman Crampton's 100 Best Small Towns in America in recent years, it also holds the unofficial title of America's most hateful small town. In March, the Southern Poverty Law Center, a national nonprofit civil rights organization, released its hate map of the bases of 939 hate groups active in the United States last year. With its seven hate groups, ranging from Robb's KKK to a racist music group (whose members include two

of Robb's granddaughters), Harrison was atop the list for small towns.

Thomas Robb's property in rural Arkansas includes this building that serves as the administrative office for his group, Knights of the Ku Klux Klan. Cole Lansden

For people like Mike Hallimore, leader of Kingdom Identity Ministries, another Harrison-based group on the list, the recognition is welcome. "Harrison has the image that it's a white-racist town, and I'm glad the town has that image," he says. "It probably prevents some of the nonwhites from settling here."

But for many others, that distinction is an embarrassment — and something they're hoping to change. Today, the number of Harrison residents who subscribe to hateful viewpoints seems to have dwindled, but the perception of the town as a major racist enclave persists. And in the 11 years since the task force was created, the town's residents have yet to fully embrace it. Coverage of the group by local media and by white-supremacists outlets is often met with online comments questioning its credibility and denigrating its members.

Residents disagree on whether the town has a race problem, an image problem or both. Many say the town of today is being unfairly blamed for events of a century ago, when white mobs allegedly chased out black residents in the first decade of the 20th century. Today, Harrison has about 70 African-American residents, who make up 0.5 percent of the population (a share that's consistent with those of nearby towns). Some say that the hate groups' push to paint the town as a friendlier place for white nationalists than nonwhites contradicts their own experiences — and that Harrison's reputation is worse than reality.

"People don't want to stay here. People don't want to come here, because we have a reputation," says Layne Ragsdale, one of the more vocal members of the task force. "You can see our future being taken away."

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A 'powder keg'

Downtown Harrison is a sleepy place. The town square is filled with flower baskets hanging from lampposts on sidewalks, and, on a recent weekday, pedestrians outside local consignment and furniture stores were few. Inside the library, in the heart of downtown, smiling kindergarteners rushed around for arts-and-crafts activities.

But a few miles from downtown, by an open grass field, a yellow billboard is

Thomas Robb is proud of what he's built in Harrison over four decades. As national leader of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Robb says he's concerned that the town's Task Force on Race Relations is causing a divide among the town's residents. Cole Lansden

impossible to miss. It reads: "Anti-racist is a code word for anti-white."

The billboard went up in October 2013. No one has stepped forward to claim responsibility for the sign; its slogan, though, is popular among members of the white-nationalist movement. (The Harrison Sign Company, which leases out the space, declined to identify who had paid for the billboard.) Below it hangs a second billboard paid for by Harrison business owners. It depicts a smiling family of four. They are white.

"Welcome to Harrison

"Beautiful town

"Beautiful people

"No wrong exits

"No bad neighborhoods"

In Harrison, it's impossible to have a conversation about the struggle for the town's identity without mentioning the yellow billboard.

"That just lit off a powder keg," says Nate Jordon, the lead facilitator for the task force. "Whoever is behind that sign felt that they were losing ground in Harrison, and this was their last-ditch effort to attempt to ruin this town."

Alex Marschall moved to Harrison not long ago from Connecticut for an internship through the Heart of America Psychology Training Consortium. When Marschall visited to look for an apartment she first heard about the town's 138-year history — and drove past the billboard. "It scared me the first time that I saw it," says the 20-something Marschall, the youngest active member of the task force. "I kind of thought, 'Where am I moving to?' "

Last month, the Harrison Sign Company declined to renew the leases for either of the billboards, according to the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette. Instead, they will be replaced by billboards for a local Baptist church and a nearby McDonald's, said the company's owner, Claude West, the newspaper reported. The church billboard offers a starkly different message than that of its predecessor: "Where everyone is welcome."

We are not pretending to be perfect. But we know we are not the community that people portray us to be.

Carolyn Cline

Harrison Community Task Force on Race Relations

On a rainy day in late July, inside the Harrison Chamber of Commerce building, the task force is holding its new-member orientation. The event has brought out only a handful of people,

Carolyn Cline, right, gives an overview of the history of African Americans in Harrison to old and new members of the Task Force on Race Relations during the group's monthly new-member orientation. Despite the best efforts by the task force, some community members have been hesitant to embrace the group. Cole Lansden

but that doesn't deter the event's organizers — five white women — from making a 45-minute presentation about the town's history. They are a friendly, welcoming bunch. One woman wears a T-shirt with the Martin Luther King Jr. quote that has come to help define the task force's efforts: "Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that."

The room grows quiet as Carolyn Cline, the elder stateswoman of the group, begins to speak. Cline, a local blueberry farmer, is one of the more seasoned voices on Harrison's history and its current image issues. She scrolls through the history and documents on Harrison's black residents in the early 1900s on the posters across the room.

"We are not pretending to be perfect," Cline says. "But we know we are not the community that people portray us to be."

The history Cline and the task force stress has been either forgotten, pushed aside or left undiscovered until recently. Jacqueline Froelich, a Fayetteville-based journalist, began to uncover the town's complicated past 15 years ago.

In 1905, racial tension in the community hit a boiling point when as many as 10 black laborers were tied to trees and beaten. According to Froelich's research, some of the town's roughly 100 black residents were forced out, both in 1905 and again in 1909, turning Harrison into a "sundown town": an all-white area where blacks weren't allowed after sunset.

"The ethnic cleansing of Harrison … is arguably the most important event in the town's social history," Froelich wrote in the Arkansas Historical Quarterly, "devastating the lives of those African American citizens for whom Harrison had been home, encouraging the use of violence to force social change and protect local interests, and petrifying the town's approach to race for many years to come."

In 2003, George Holcomb, then a reporter for the Harrison Daily Times, wrote a series on how Harrison's history of racial strife had influenced its contemporary culture. "When I lived in a more culturally diverse town, you didn't hear people just casually talk about n------" says Holcomb, who moved to the town in 1976 and has served as president of the task force. "But here, it was accepted. That's how it was."

The fallout from the articles led to swift action. In danger of having their town forever labeled racist, 13 pastors gathered and acknowledged its reputation. They decided it was time to form a group to improve race relations and respond to the town's characterization by hate groups and local and national media as unfriendly to nonwhites.

Jeff Crockett has been mayor of Harrison since 2011. Cole Lansden

Since then, the group has organized dozens of speaking events at colleges around the state through its I Am the Movement effort, and paid for billboards that promote civility and respect. But progress has been slow. Members say some of this is due to a lack of focused messaging and branding.

When Jeff Crockett, then a real-estate developer and an owner of several liquor stores, arrived in Harrison from Chicago in the late '80s, he did business with a black man from the Ozarks. Crockett, charismatic and open, invited the man to join him for dinner. The man politely declined the offer, telling Crockett he didn't visit Harrison at night.

Those conversations have stuck with Crockett, the town's mayor since January 2011. He says the town has made strides in terms of attracting younger families, but that there's still a struggle in persuading families of color to move to Harrison. Says Crockett, "Unfortunately, it's there in your face all the time."

Kevin Cheri, an African-American superintendent for nearby Buffalo National River, remembers the comments and looks he received from residents when he moved to the area decades ago. He blames the stares on people's lack of exposure to African-Americans. When his father first visited, Cheri told the older man that he just kept smiling at people. That way, they would think he was either a nice guy or crazy, but would leave him alone.

But Cheri can't hide his frustrations with members of the hate groups and local and national media who, he says, keep pushing the myth of Harrison as a dangerous, unwelcoming place. Cheri says the town's reputation is unfair and that he feels safe in Harrison, which has been a good place to raise his family.

"This reputation is hurting us," says Cheri, who recently joined the task force. "And here we're thinking we're nice and happy, but we don't realize that other people see us in this other light when we're not that way. What's really been affecting the town right now is this reputation that continues to be exaggerated by those who are really ignorant of the truth."

Harrison is a nice community that's made up of white people, and we supposedly mistreated blacks 100 years ago. They don't feel guilty for what's happened to white people.

Thomas Robb

leader of Knights of the Ku Klux Klan

The front yard of Robb's ranch is littered with old Fisher-Price cars and other toys for parishioners' kids. A pink bike lies on the ground, across from a swing set. Inside are the sorts of trinkets and items often found in small churches — flyers of upcoming events,

Mike Hallimore is leader of Kingdom Identity Ministries. He agrees with Robb on doctrine, but the two aren't friends. Cole Lansden

pictures of members' children, rows of chairs lined up in front of the altar. Robb says his KKK organization has always been this way, putting family and morals first. Then, his attention turns to a phrase he's mentioned a few times already: "white genocide." Immigration and high birth rates among nonwhites are changing the economic and social landscape of Harrison and the country, he says.

"I think they feel guilt," says Robb, referring to the task force. "Harrison is a nice community that's made up of white people, and we supposedly mistreated blacks 100 years ago. They don't feel guilty for what's happened to white people. It's all one-sided."

Sixty yards down the hill stands a one-story white building with a red door, the red-and-white KKK insignia painted above it. The building serves as the official center for business matters relating to Robb and the KKK. At one end of a hall is the merchandise room from which official Klan gear, ranging from key chains to DVDs, is shipped out. At the other end is a video library of sorts, featuring videocassettes of hundreds of TV interviews, stories and pop-culture references to Robb or the Klan. There's Robb's interview with Geraldo Rivera in the '90s and "Pinkeye," a South Park episode in which one character inadvertently dresses up as a Klan member on Halloween.

"They don't care that Beaver can't come back home," says Robb, referring to the fictional character in the 1950s sitcom "Leave It to Beaver" and the changing racial landscape in American culture. "They don't care that millions of white people are forced out. They don't care that there's a white genocide being committed against our people."

Sipping a coffee at the Neighbor's Mill Bakery & Café, just outside of downtown Harrison, Hallimore, of the Kingdom Identity Ministries, offers what he believes to be a simple solution to the town's — and the country's — perceived race issues.

"I do believe in ethnic cleansing," says Hallimore, whose group has an estimated 50,000 followers, a large share of whom identify with the Aryan Brotherhood, the white-supremacist prison-gang and crime syndicate. "I would cleanse the U.S. and send [the African-Americans] back to Africa, but I'd do it in a kind way by providing for them and getting them started back toward their homeland. The same for the Orientals and the Mexicans and so on."

Despite living a few miles outside of town, Hallimore, a California native and one-time electronic-engineering major at California State Polytechnic, Pomona, has been a Harrison stalwart for almost 50 years. A former owner and manager of a Radio Shack, Hallimore became heavily involved in various Christian ministries in the state, but became disappointed by what he felt was a culture of compromised doctrine and ethics. As a child, he'd camped in the Harrison area with his family and was drawn back to Arkansas in 1966. Sixteen years

later, he decided to put his full efforts into his ministry work in order to have, he says, “the most doctrinally sound, ethical ministry anywhere.” At the bakery, Hallimore, a regular, is greeted with “How are ya, Mike?” by a couple of patrons.

Hallimore agrees with Robb on doctrine, but they aren’t friends. The Kingdom Identity Ministries leader describes Robb’s Knights Party as “Ku Klux Klowns,” while Robb brushes off the notion that Hallimore’s group is comparable to the Knights Party, saying his work amounts to little more than the distribution of pamphlets or newsletters.

Still, the two men, both in their 60s, remain the most notable public figures in what has turned into a struggle with the task force to define the town. Robb says it’s the task force, not groups like his, that is the source of the town’s strife. “In all my [43] years at Harrison, I never had to ask somebody what side they were on,” he says. “And it was suddenly because of the diversity council … they’re taking sides. They’re dividing the community.”

The task force’s fight to get its message out continues. Inside the Harrison Chamber of Commerce office, Cline and the others describe the feedback they’ve received in support of their work. But they realize they’ll need a break or two if they are to change the town’s issues — whether it be race, perception, the Klan, whatever. And whether they’ll ever get there is anyone’s guess.

“We want to fix this problem here,” Ragsdale says. “I hope in 10 years we are not still talking about the same thing.”

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In Chatham, an austere utopia yields to a relentless tide - The Boston Globe

Two of five summer cottages on the southern tip of Nauset Beach in Chatham were knocked off their foundations by a storm this week. They will be demolished.

Two of five summer cottages on the southern tip of Nauset Beach in Chatham were knocked off their foundations by a storm this week. They will be demolished. (Vincent DeWitt for The Boston Globe)
By Brian MacQuarrieGlobe Staff / June 25, 2009

CHATHAM - The end rolled into view yesterday for the last survivors of First Village, in the form of moody waters propelled by an unusually high tide stirred by a storm more suited for winter than summer.

Camps succumb to nature in Chatham

Camps succumb to nature in Chatham

As the ocean licked at the cluster of five storied and spartan cottages, celebrated by their owners as much for what they're not as for what they are, one of the last enclaves of its kind began collapsing into the sea.

"We lost 40 feet of beachfront over the last few days," said Bill Hammatt, an owner who had hoped to savor a farewell season at his beloved cottage. "Unfortunately, it has terminally damaged all five of the remaining buildings."

The slow death by millions of cuts of Atlantic surf began in 2007, when an April storm sliced a breach through this ever-changing finger of Nauset Beach. Since then, the break has been carved into a wide new inlet to Chatham Harbor, made an island of Second Village to the south, and reduced First Village from 12 cottages to five.

"I have to tell you, it's a very sad feeling," said Todd Thayer, whose family has enjoyed one of the barrier-beach cottages, or "camps," for 50 years.

Like the Thayers, the rest of the First Village colony has cherished this simple Cape Cod paradise for generations. Now, their hopes for a farewell summer have been dashed near the

place where author Henry David Thoreau said a man could "put all of America behind him."

"They realize it really is past the point of no return," Keon said.

Two of the camps had tilted over by yesterday morning, waves were lapping at the cottages, and a persistent storm had chewed up whatever small buffer of sand remained.

As a result, four of the owners yesterday asked for permission to demolish what's left of their camps, said Ted Keon, the town's director of coastal resources.

Only a week ago, Hammatt foresaw the grim but inexorable finish.

"All we need is one big storm, and we're gone," Hammatt said of the camps, which can be reached only by boat or by off-road vehicle from Orleans.

As more of the beach disappeared after the breakthrough, Hammatt allowed his four neighbors to move their cottages northward onto his eroding property, where they huddled to make a final, doomed stand against the elements.

"Why not?" Hammatt said of the gesture. "What sense does it make to say I have all this land but only I can use it. We're all friends."

While Hammatt and his neighbors try to reconcile themselves to their loss, Keon and other town officials are pondering the breach's long-term impact on the Cape's largest commercial fishing fleet. New currents, blocked channels, and the need for new navigation routes are all possibilities.Continued...

The changes make for a high-stakes guessing game, with one dreaded option being the forced relocation of the entire fleet to another area of Chatham.

"I don't know if this is two years out or 50 years out," Keon said.

Already, Keon said, the tidal range has increased by about a foot. The potential effect on mainland property remains unclear, but the town has not forgotten the painful loss of 10 homes there after another major breach two decades ago.

"There is no doubt there are legitimate concerns," said Keon, who previously worked in coastal planning for the US Army Corps of Engineers. "Will we see similar levels of erosion?"

The destruction of First Village seems certain to leave a hole in Chatham's fabric.

"This is one of the last bastions where you went and camped and didn't have electricity unless you had a generator," said Mary Ann Gray, an archivist at the Chatham Historical Society. "It was primitive living, and they were passed down from one family to another. They are very important to the local people of the town."

Before the storm, Hammatt, 66, had begun sketching plans for his farewell. He did not divulge the details, but an emotional farewell seemed certain.

“It’s an absolutely wonderful experience there,’’ Hammatt said. “Not many spots left like that anywhere.’’

Indeed, other remnants of that isolated lifestyle on Cape Cod are limited primarily to Sandy Neck in Barnstable, Orleans, and the dune shacks in and near Provincetown.

Thayer, 46, who estimated his family had spent $35,000 to move the camp twice, huddled with his three brothers recently to weigh their options during a 50th birthday celebration.

The camp had been in the family for a half-century, and distant summer memories of gas lanterns, the lighthouse beacon, the sound of surf, and the Red Sox on the radio still conjured a warm, heartening glow.

But that was before the storm.

“I think it’s clear that house is not long for this world,’’ Thayer said at the time. “It’s like putting a dog down, that’s how you wrestle with this decision.’’

Through it all, however, the pull of the place proved to be as strong as the tides that destroyed it.

“The drive to the beach was the greatest drive in the world,’’ Thayer said of his childhood. “I’m very fortunate we had it as long as we did.’’

In a quixotic longshot, Thayer and his brothers had hoped that a major shift in wind or tide might spare their slice of Eden. Now, that dream is gone, replaced by a bit of downsized whimsy.

“If I have even a little land left, maybe I can get a beach sticker and hang out with my kids there,’’ Thayer mused. “It’s such a precious piece of real estate.’’

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Inside Tennessee's disappearing pearl industry | Al Jazeera America

aljazeera.com

Once a source of major economic growth, the state's shell and pearl industry has in recent years all but vanished

June 29, 2014 5:00AM ET
by Rhian Sasseen @RhianSasseen

CAMDEN, Tenn. — Two hours west of Nashville, the highway narrows, and the trees close in. Camden, the seat of Benton County, has a scant 3,582 residents and is rural yet connected with the outside world. This is, after all, where country music star Patsy Cline's plane crashed in 1963, killing her on a rainy March evening. And Camden is the hub of the American shell and pearl industry — though for how much longer is uncertain.

Pearls are "the earliest gems known to prehistoric man," the American mineralogist George Frederick Kunz wrote in 1908. "No object of veneration has been without this ornament; no poetical production has lacked this symbol of purity and chastity." To create a pearl is a kind of alchemy. What was once ordinary — a bead, a shell — transforms, over time, into the rare, the fantastic. There is a mythic quality to this metamorphosis, immortalized in verse in Shakespeare's "The Tempest": "Full fathom five thy father lies," the spirit Ariel sings. "Those are pearls that were his eyes."

Pearls have been found in burial mounds in Ohio and along the Tennessee River. The colonist John Smith, writing in 1608, recalled the "many chains of great pearls" the Native American leader Powhatan wore around his neck. The so-called New World, Kunz writes in his definitive study, "The Book of the Pearl," would go on to supply many pearls to Europe, and pearl rushes in an increasingly industrialized United States were not uncommon.

Opening a mussel that has been cultivated for pearls. TennesseeRiverPearls.com

To grow a pearl one first needs a shell. This shell is attached to a mollusk, and though the popular image is that of an oyster, it is in fact the mussel that most successfully grows pearls. Unlike those collected by the solitary diver of Steinbeck's "The Pearl," cultured pearls are grown on farms, specifically, Japanese pearl farms. "There's a huge industry of exports," says pearl enthusiast India Rows, "for mussel shells that come out of the Tennessee River, and this dates way back to Mikimoto's time."

Rows is the founder of the Pearl Girls, a Georgia-based jewelry company and blog for which she has researched the history of the gems. Kokichi Mikimoto is the Japanese businessman who invented the cultured pearl in 1893 and is something of a god in the industry today. Without the company that still bears his name, there would be virtually no affordable pearls available, considering the effects of overfishing and pollution worldwide.

At the time that Mikimoto was developing the cultured pearl, the mother-of-pearl industry expanded in the United States, and button factories could be found along the Mississippi River. (Mother-of-pearl, or nacre, is the irridescent layer that coats the inner shell of some mollusks.)The button companies began exporting the shells that they collected to Japan, where they were used as the nuclei needed to create pearls.

This nucleus, essentially a round bead, is inserted into the mussel as an irritant; in response, the mussel produces nacre, slowly building it around the intruder until a pearl is formed.

With the rise of plastics and the decline of mother-of-pearl buttons after World War II, Camden's shell exporters began to focus more intensely on cultured pearl farms. "The goal never was, 'Let's find some pearls,'" says Rows. "When people first started finding pearls, a few people did find success in selling their pearls to New York jewelers … but this actual shell business was really the main money out there, the export business to Japan, to Australia, to throughout the world."

But just as plastic changed the button industry, advances in culturing pearls have led to a decline in the need for nuclei and, subsequently, Tennessee's shells. "During peak harvest years," the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency reports, "the commercial mussel shell industry in Tennessee employs approximately 2,000 people and provides nearly $50 million to the Tennessee economy … Currently, 2 to 5 million pounds of mussel shells, with a wholesale value of 2 to 6 million dollars are harvested annually." But these peak harvest figures are no longer reflective of today's shell and pearl market. According to the TWRA, only 43 mussel diving permits were issued in the 2013 fiscal year. As of the 2010 census, 36 percent of Camden's residents were reported as living below the poverty line.

The divers who remain are nearly impossible to find. A forum post on Pearl-Guide.com, a popular enthusiast and collector website, jokes of pearl fever, manifested in an abiding desire to hide one's sources, as the root of such secrecy. But the dangerous nature of the work, paired with the dwindling local economy, might be a better explanation for missed calls, unanswered messages and suspicion toward outsiders.

Pearl diving is a vocation that has been shaped by the poor visibility and dirt that characterize the Tennessee River. "The river bottom can be sandy, rocky or muddy," a Pearl Guide poster who calls himself Mikeyy reports on the forum. "The current may be stronger in some places than in others." A diver named Bennie Woods told Alabama's Times Daily that being a mussel diver "can get pretty scary at times. A lot of time when you are probing around a stump looking for shells, there will be a giant catfish hiding under the stump … If you are diving near the barge channel, you can hear the screws of the tow boats turning as they pass you by." Unlike Japan's Mikimoto Pearl Island, where white-clad ama divers — female traditional free divers — perform hourly for the visiting crowds, the life of the Tennessee River diver, always difficult and now increasingly without rewards, is not for tourists.

As Tennessee's divers dwindle, China has in recent years become the leading exporter of cultured pearls, flooding the market with what many consider a lower-quality product and hastening the demise of the Tennessee shell industry. The key difference between Chinese pearl farms and those of other countries is the process by which they nucleate their pearls.

The Chinese pearl farms have found a way to irritate their mussels without a shell nucleus, using instead only mussel tissue. Tissue nucleation, an effective cost-cutting measure, is now being imitated by farms in other countries, leading to a decline in U.S. shell exports.

The repercussions of the Chinese pearl farms' self-sufficiency have begun to be felt in Camden. There is a distinct feeling that what was once a boomtown is now a bust. The city, which experienced steady population growth from 1850 to 2000, reported a decline between the 2000 and 2010 censuses.

A mural on the side of the United States Pearl Co., a pearl wholesaler headquartered in downtown Camden, welcomes visitors to "Benton County, Pearl Capitol [sic] of the USA." The building's windows are tightly shuttered.

Bob Keast, owner of Tennessee River Pearls, with a basket of mussels. TennesseeRiverPearls.com

The U.S. Pearl Co. is owned by James Peach, a former member of the Tennessee House of Representatives who started out as a fisherman and pearl farmer, credits himself on Twitter as the "key person in blocking Gov. [Ned] McWerther from enacting a state income tax." Peach confirmed via email that "the shell industry has been [in] decline since 1995. Consequently, natural pearls have been on [the] same decline … The increased production of tissue-pearl production in Asia has had a very big impact."

Today the only freshwater-pearl-culturing farm in the U.S. is owned by Bob Keast and is 15 minutes from Camden. The Birdsong Resort, Marina and Campground stands on the shores of the Kentucky Lake, one of the country's largest man-made bodies of water, which was created in 1944 by the Tennessee Valley Authority.

At the compound's center stands the farm's freshwater pearl museum. It is a small room to the right of a combination office and gift shop, and its shelves are crowded with a boggling amount of pearls. Under the room's low lighting, they glint like oil. Photos of Keast and a variety of old newspaper clippings hang on the walls. "Keast named official Tennessee ambassador," reads one from 2001; another shows him shaking Bill Clinton's hand, grinning. In the corner stands a mannequin in a wedding dress. A few pearl-themed toys from the 1990s — a Barbie, some sort of game with claws — sit next to the pearls on one shelf, still in their packaging. A thin layer of dust covers the plastic wrappers.

The farm was founded by John Latendresse, a Mikimoto-esque figure credited with bringing pearl culturing to the United States. While his family still owns the American Pearl Co. — a wholesaler like U.S. Pearl Co. in Nashville — and sells jewelry in the farm's gift shop, Keast bought the farm after Latendresse's death in 2000.

A biographical placard devoted to Latendresse hints at controversy between the farm and Camden's divers, stating that "protests from local fishermen" followed the farm's founding because of an agreement between Latendresse and the Tennessee Valley Authority that granted Latendresse exclusive use of the lake. "The lease," this placard goes on to state, "allowed fishing 150 feet from the shore, and culturing is actually good for aquatic life," but it

is unclear whether the protests stemmed from outrage over this exclusivity or concerns about overfishing. Nevertheless, in 1983 the farm produced its first crop of pearls.

Today the farm employs 12 people, with only one diver among them — fewer than half its employees during its heyday, when a yearly harvest of 25 million pounds of shells was not uncommon. Back then, Keast says as he paces the floor, the Chinese farms were "a big customer. And they have invented an imitation process for implantation. We, on the other hand, have the real thing."

But as he promotes the authenticity and significance of Tennessee pearls, Keast admits that the farm no longer focuses on shell and pearl export. In what seems like an attempt to survive Tennessee's declining role in the global pearl industry, the farm has turned its attention to local tourism, hoping to shift its revenue from shell and pearl harvests to tours of the farm's facilities. But will it work? "People want the real thing, you know?" he says. "Americans want to buy American. We want to buy the hamburger at the county fair and pass up 10 McDonald's and 10 Taco Bells getting to the county fair." Voice rising nearly to a shout and arms swinging, he continues, "And we'll pay two dollars more for a hamburger at the county fair than we will pay at the local McDonald's, because the baby boomers are wanting to reach into America and take those road trips and get off the beaten path."

But is a pearl necklace akin to a sandwich? The Chinese pearls have furthered the democratization of the pearl market even beyond Mikimoto. A traditional 16-inch strand of cultured pearls — the kind that brings to mind a smiling Jackie O. and a different America — retails for the baseline price of $2,620 on the Mikimoto website. In comparison, a strand of Chinese-grown cultured Akoya pearls (the most famous variety) retails for $250 at New York's American Pearl jewelers. In a country still recovering from the 2008 financial crisis, Mikimoto's is out of the price range of many, no matter how much more authentic it may be.

A reality show pilot called "Goin' Pearl Crazy," which bills itself as a "Duck Dynasty"–esque portrayal of Keast and the pearl farm, was filmed by Animal Planet and aired in the fall of 2013 (in what seems to be a point of contention for Keast, it was not picked up). Another, "Dixie Divers," was filmed by the Discover Channel; Keast says it has not aired.

An employee enters the room, bringing Keast a cup of tea and a folder filled with business cards and fact sheets, including a 12-page printout from his website that includes his resume, height and weight, dislikes (rice pudding) and personal accomplishments ("sold Hank Williams Jr. a new Ranger boat"). The school year will soon be ending, and tourist season will soon begin. Keast expects 20,000 to 24,000 visitors a month, he says. And then?

"Our younger people are not into it for the long haul," he admits. "Would you say that it's losing popularity?" Another long pause. "Probably so."

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Posted on October 29, 2014 by Alistair Dove

Interview with the Vampire Blennies

This is our second guest post from ichthyologist, tech diver and all-round good guy Dr. Luiz Rocha at the California Academy of Sciences. You should follow him on Twitter

When you hear "vampires" you usually think "Twilight", "Vampire Diaries" or "True Blood". However, a very interesting group of fishes have also taken up the name. Vampire Blennies (a.k.a. Fang Blennies or Sabertooth Blennies) have elongated fangs that give them great versatility. Blennies are a diverse family small fishes that are poor swimmers usually with secretive behavior. Most hide in crevices in the reef or swim always in contact with the bottom to avoid being eaten. But unlike other Blennies (and human vampires), Vampire Blennies are often out in the open because larger predatory fish are scared of their fangs and painful bites!

A Brown Vampire Blenny showing its fangs. Photo courtesy of Mark McGrouther/Australian Museum.

Many Vampire Blennies use their large fangs and powerful jaws to snack on other fishes. The Bluestriped Fangblenny darts towards much larger fish and removes scales, chunks of skin and/or pieces of fin to feed on. But fish learn to recognize them and stay away as much as possible.

And that's why the False Cleanerfish adopted an incredible strategy. It looks exactly like the Cleaner Wrasse, a fish that removes parasites from the skin of other fishes. By looking like the Cleaner Wrasse, the False Cleanerfish easily gets close to other fish, but instead of cleaning, it bites!

Bluestriped Blenny (Plagiotremus rhinorhynchos)

Unlike the species discussed so far, perhaps the most incredible group of Vampire Blennies, the genus *Meiacanthus*, uses their fangs for defense, not attack. They have a very specialized venom gland enveloping the base of their canines. When attacked by larger fish, they use their long sharp fangs to inject venom into their attacker. During my last trip to the Red Sea, when attempting to carefully take a small tissue sample of a live Black-Lined Vampire Blenny and return it to the reef, it bit me! Even though there are

Cleaner Wrasse (left) and it's mimic, the False Cleanerfish (right)

scattered reports of painful bites, my bite wasn't painful at all. I was just shocked to see that a small fish like that (about 2 inches long) could cut my skin in one bite with such ease: the fangs were extremely sharp and strong.

The bite of a Vampire Blenny!

The *Meiacanthus* defense mechanism is so effective at deterring predators that most are mimicked by other blennies, cardinalfish or even juvenile breams. Predators tend to avoid *Meiacanthus* due to previous bad experiences, so by looking like them, the mimics get protection. Moral of the story? In the coral reef, looking like a vampire is a good thing and will keep predators away!

Black-Lined Vampire Blenny (left) and its mimic Townsend's Fangblenny (right)

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Is the Pope Catholic? Critics Rally Around Benedict As Talk of Schism Looms

thedailybeast.com

Conservative Catholics, angry at Pope Francis's more moderate tone, are bucking the Church's hierarchy.

Almost from the beginning, there have been rumblings of discontent about Pope Francis. While the world's media fell in love with him, there were more conservative bishops who felt that Francis's popular appeal came at the expense of carefully worked-out Church rituals and teachings. They saw Francis as chipping away at established Church teachings on sexuality, kowtowing to the liberal media, and acting aggressively towards conservative church leaders.

Criticism of Francis has come to a head with the publication of the final report of the Synod on the Family. Despite changing absolutely nothing doctrinally, the Synod's recommendations for a more understanding attitude to those in unconventional family arrangements have ignited a firestorm of controversy among conservative commentators. The possibility that Catholics who had divorced and remarried without receiving an annulment might be readmitted into full communion with the Church has made many apoplectic.

Writing on his diocesan website, Bishop Thomas Tobin accused Francis of being fond of "making a mess" and stated that the Synod voting concept "struck [him] as being rather Protestant." A funny argument, since Catholic bishops have been voting on key issues since the Council of Nicaea in 325, but that's beside the point. Tobin seems to be suggesting that with Francis at the helm, the Catholic Church is no longer acting like the Catholic Church.

For over a year conservative Catholics have had their chastity belts in a twist over Francis and apparently, the chafing has finally grown too much to bear.

Over at *The New York Times*, columnist Ross Douthat, a convert to Roman Catholicism, warned that Francis's current path could "eventually lead to real schism." With the threat of schism hanging in the air he then encourages a kind of rebellion: "True Catholics," he writes, must "resist" the Pope's pressure to change the Church.

Other conservatives agree, pointing to Paul's Letter to the Galatians, in which the upstart self-proclaimed Apostle Paul describes a meeting when he called out Peter—the first Pope—for hypocrisy. To his face and everything. According to Paul, Peter backed down. Now traditionalists want to use this as a precedent for calling out the Pope when he's not Pope-y enough.

> Benedict is hanging back for now, but there's no doubt that he could easily become a figurehead for traditionalists harkening back to the good old days.

Proof-texting from scripture in order to criticize the Pope—now who's being Protestant?

Conservative Cardinals seem to be getting in on the act. Last weekend Australian Cardinal George Pell unnecessarily reminded his congregants not only that Pope Francis is the 266th Pope, but also that "history has seen 37 false or antipopes." Antipopes? Does Cardinal Pell intend to hint that Francis isn't a true Pope? Was Cardinal Pell not there when Francis was elected?

But there's a reason to pay attention to this particular breed of shrill complaint: there's more than one Pope in town.

Much like an ex-partner you keep running into in the street, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI's continued presence in the church serves as a constant reminder of the way things used to be. Benedict's occasional but thoroughly traditional statements offer a painful reminder and glimmer of hope to conservative Catholics. Just last week, in written remarks read aloud at the Pontifical Urbanian University in Rome, Benedict wrote that interreligious dialogue "is no substitute for spreading the Gospel to non-Christian cultures." Benedict's arguments are expressed somewhat philosophically, but they are music to the ears of those tired of Francis's soft embrace of atheists, aliens, and—worst of all—progressive social policies.

Conservatives can also be encouraged that Benedict is showing support, albeit subtly, for the previously important conservative Cardinals that Francis ousted from power. Cardinal Raymond Burke, a pro-life traditional prelate whose demotion by Francis was recently announced, invited Benedict to a Latin Mass at the Vatican. In declining the invitation, Benedict wrote that he was glad that the Latin Mass was being "celebrated by great cardinals," a statement that many conservatives see as tacit support for those sent into exile by Francis.

Benedict is hanging back for now, but there's no doubt that he could easily become a figurehead for traditionalists harkening back to the good old days. In some ways, he already has. In somewhat ominous tones that have rightly been called threatening, Douthat exclaims to his "true Catholic" audience, "Remember there is another pope still living!" Having warned that Pope Francis and the Synod are leading us towards schism, does Douthat mean to imply that "true Catholics" will or should stage a coup?

It's almost as if the Catholic Church was recently baptized in a vat of irony: so-called traditionalists—the same people who insisted that liberals fall in line behind John Paul II and Benedict XVI—are petulantly calling for schism and for bucking Church hierarchy. What makes it even more absurd: Francis isn't all that liberal. He cares profoundly and deeply about the poor, but he rarely speaks about supporting women, holds the line on contraception and abortion, and is only selectively pro-environment. In keeping with official Church teaching he believes in the reality of evolution, and in keeping with official Church teaching he believes in the power of exorcism. The Pope is Catholic, go figure.

Traditionalists appear to be buying into the media spin about which they themselves complain. In doing so they are actually bolstering Francis's lib credentials. Perhaps the hawks should settle down, stop drinking the libertine media Kool-Aid they've been protesting about for so long, and act like the pro-hierarchy traditionalists they claim to be.

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Is there really a ghost town at the bottom of Round Valley reservoir?

By Renée Kiriluk-Hill | Hunterdon Democrat on April 08, 2013 at 6:53 PM, updated April 08, 2013 at 9:47 PM nj.com

Round Valley Reservoir

It's said that the deep waters of Round Valley Reservoir are an underwater ghost town, replete with the homes, barns, silos and other structures in place.

Like many myths, this one has a kernel of truth in it, namely that the land under the large, man-made lake was home to countless generations of Native Americans and then New World settlers, until the state proposed two reservoirs intended to supply Newark and other growing cities in northeast Jersey.

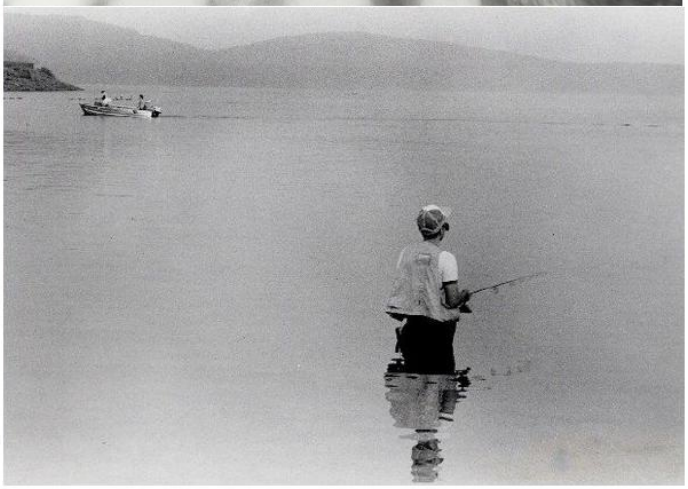
State officials feared a water shortage, particularly after a drought in 1953. They looked west, focusing on Somerset and Hunterdon counties, with plans for a big pipeline to Newark, along Route 22 or the new Route 78.

The pipeline plan apparently was felled by inter-city controversy, but the state sent land appraisers into the valley in 1956.

Two years later a $46 million bond issue was approved by voters in every county except Hunterdon to build Round Valley and nearby Spruce Run Reservoir.

Locally the plan was opposed on multiple fronts. Some landowners didn't want to sell. Local officials didn't want thousands of acres taken off the tax rolls. And politicians debated whether the state belonged in the water business.

The state went forward with the reservoir portion of the water-supply plan, purchasing dozens of properties, including farms that had been in families for generations, and allowed residents to move their homes, at the homeowners' expense, or leave them behind, according to Stephanie Stevens, "Beneath These Waters" author and chairwoman of the Hunterdon County Cultural & Heritage Commission.



Farm equipment, supplies and livestock were auctioned off. Once the residents left, some of their neighbors picked over the sites. And then the state demolished the structures left behind.

RELATED:Your Instagram photos of Round Valley

The sites were cleared, with the state salvaging some materials such as old barn beams. Foundations were left in place before the valley was flooded, starting in the mid 1960s.

Round Valley Recreation Area covers 3,684 acres, the 2,350-acre reservoir surrounded by forest and recreation areas. The reservoir has a capacity of 55 billion gallons and is one of the deepest lakes in the state.

Round Valley is one of the few parks offering wilderness camping — campsites on the reservoir's eastern side are accessible only by hiking or boating, the parking lot is three miles away from the nearest site.

"The reservoir has a capacity of 55 billion gallons and is one of the deepest lakes in the state."

There is a sandy beach swimming area, formed by the construction of an earth dam across a narrow waterway on the west side of the reservoir, separating it from the main part of the reservoir.

People also come here to boat, fish, ski cross-country, go sledding, hike and picnic. The reservoir is particularly popular with fisherman, offering species of trout, including lake trout, bass and other fish.

Through the years residents have told stories about ice skating at the reservoir and ice sailing took place here at least one winter.

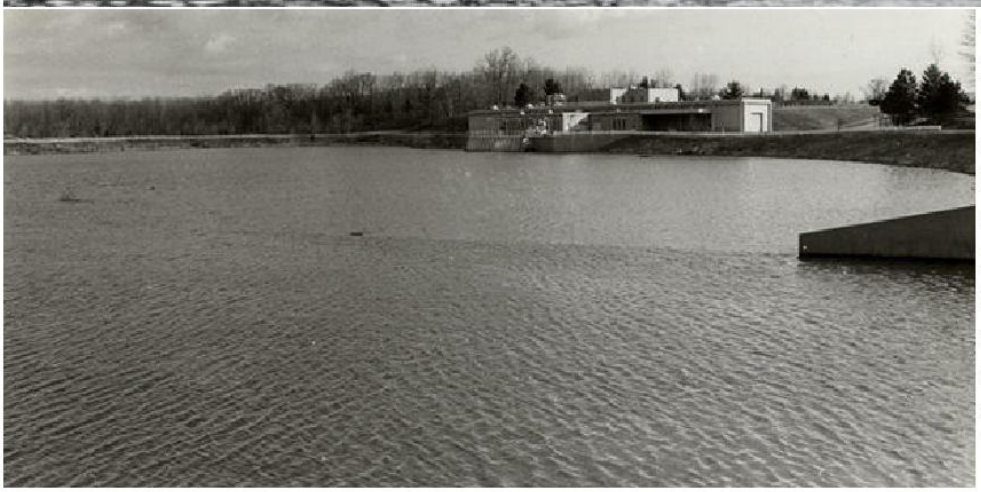
In 1977, the state built a 12-foot diameter pipeline a few miles long to connect the reservoir

with a branch of the Rockaway Creek in Readington Township, allowing water to be released into the Raritan River system.

That happened during droughts of the early 1980s.

Since 1971, the state Department of Environmental Protection says, 23 people have died in Round Valley Reservoir, two of them suicides.

Some remains have never been found in the cold, deep

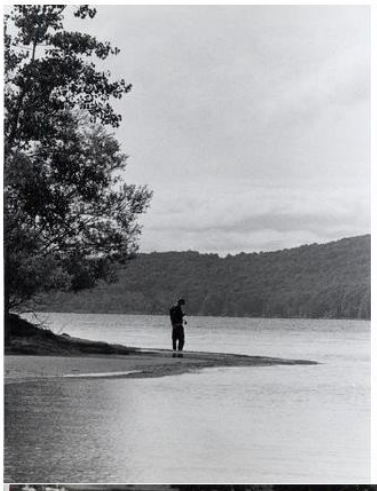


waters. In 1989, two novice divers discovered a skeleton in about 50 feet of water in one corner of the lake. A few shreds of clothing were clinging to the bones and it still had a pair of green rubber boots.

The remains were identified as a 26-year-old fisherman from Fords who had drowned 13 years earlier. The body of a friend who drowned in the same accident had surfaced 11 months after it happened.

In 1989, the state believed that the bodies of eight people presumed to have died in Round Valley hadn't yet been recovered.

In 1977 a mini-submarine had searched unsuccessfully for bodies.



On April 1, a 56-year-old fisherman from New York drowned after his canoe capsized. He was spotted trying to swim to the shoreline and a search was launched. The man's body was recovered by State Police divers shortly before nightfall, 70 feet under the surface.

Four days earlier a New Jersey Forest Fire Service firefighter was struck and killed while working a controlled burn at the recreation area. It was the first death of an on-duty Fire Service firefighter since 1977.

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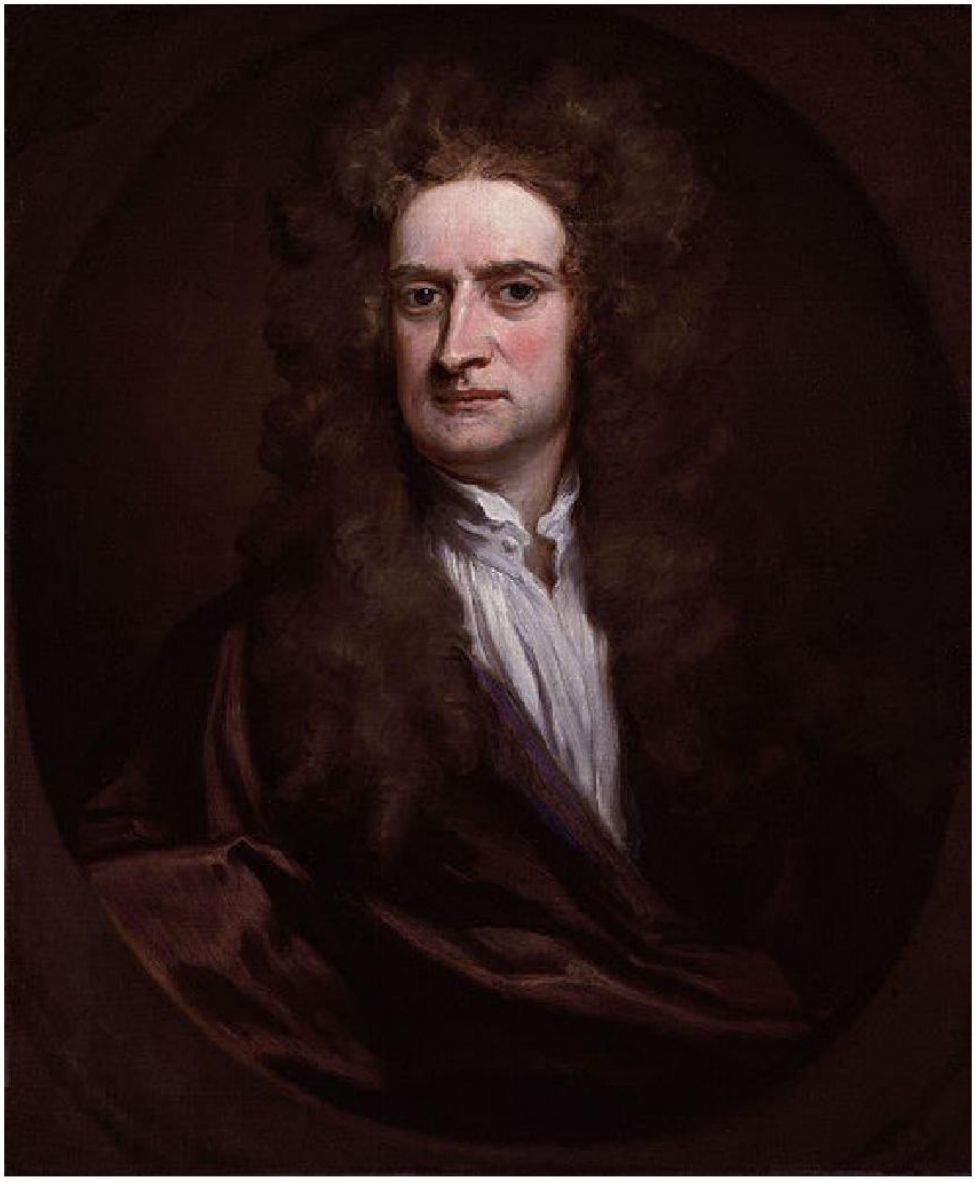

Sir Isaac Newton, the nutjob who stuck a needle in his eyeball.

Today we consider the great scientist Isaac Newton to be one of the greatest geniuses of history. After all he developed many laws and theories in the fields of physics, optics, mathematics, and astronomy which are still very relevant today. However if you actually met Sir Isaac Newton today, I guarantee you would think him to be a nutjob.

While Newton is celebrated today for his many scientific breakthroughs, his works in other, less scientific fields are largely forgotten. A dedicated alchemist and occultist, Newton spent much of his time working on experiments that are today

mostly considered outright bizarre. A devoted follower of many interesting occult sects, Newton spent years trying to determine the "sacred geometry" of Solomon's Temple, with hopes of mathematically divining the secrets of God. He also spent much time and energy trying to find and de-crypt the "Bible Code". In a detailed study of the Bible, Newton made a prediction for the end of world using the chronology of the Holy Book. According to Newton, the world should come to an end in 2060 AD. Newton calculated the end of the world specifically "to put a stop to the rash conjectures of fanciful men who are frequently predicting the time of the end, and by doing so bring the sacred prophesies into discredit as often as their predictions fail." Eat your hearts out Mayans!

Of all of Newton's discoveries, from gravity to refraction of light, from divining the location of Atlantis to discovering how to communicate with angels, Newton believed his most important work was in creating the Philosopher's Stone. Newton believed that with the Philosophers Stone he could have everlasting life and be able to turn lead into gold. He spent years, if not decades studying the work of the noted alchemist Nicholas Flammel and other alchemists, with the believe that he was about to make a breakthrough at any moment. In fact, to Newton the discovery of the Philosopher's Stone was so important that all his other discoveries were trivial when compared to his work in alchemy. His obsession with the stone caused him to have a weird set of priorities. After developing calculus, he kept his results to himself for over 30 years because he didn't think it was important and "disliked intellectual matters".

Finally some of Newton's experiments were just downright kooky and creepy. According to writings in his notebook, one experiment involved him sticking a needle into his eyeball and twirling it around to analyze how light traveled through his optic nerve,

I tooke a bodkine (needle) & put it betwixt my eye & [the] bone as neare to [the] backside of my eye as I could: & pressing my eye [with the] end of it (soe as to make [the] curvature a, bcdef in my eye) there appeared severall white darke & coloured circles r, s, t, &c. Which circles were plainest when I continued to rub my eye [with the] point of [the] bodkine, but if I held my eye & [the] bodkin still, though I continued to presse my eye [with] it yet [the] circles would grow faint & often disappeare untill I removed [them] by moving my eye or [the] bodkin.

In another strange experiment, Newton stared directly at the sun for as long as he could bare with the same objective of his "needle experiment".

While dedicated to the discovery of the Philosopher's Stone, his work would all be in vain as he died in 1727. He never did figure out how to turn lead into gold.

It's a Chew-vrolet: Hungry hamster behind £2,400 damage to rental car

mirror.co.uk

- Nov 08, 2014 12:04
- By Tim Pedley

Ross Parry / SWNS Group

Gnawty boy: Sparky the rogue hamster with his new owner Zoe Randall at the Bradford car dealership

A baby hamster has run up a £2,400 repair bill after nibbling away inside a car.

Sparky, thought to be about four weeks old, chewed through wiring, roof trim and an airbag in a rental Chevrolet Spark.

The car was taken to a garage after the airbag developed a short circuit.

Staff suspected there was an animal in the motor and left peanuts out as bait.

Service manager Tony Robinson said: "Every morning we all rushed over to the car and peered through the windows to see if the nuts had been eaten and each morning they had been but with no sign of the culprit."

Ross Parry / SWNS Group

Caught: Staff used peanuts to tempt Sparky out of his hiding place

When staff examined the car's roof dozens of peanuts fell on their heads and eventually a mechanic at the JCT600 dealership in Bradford, West Yorks, spotted the animal in the boot.

Tony explained: "According to the rental company, the car had been rented to a customer with a pregnant hamster.

"As she hasn't claimed Sparky, the hamster has been adopted by our senior service adviser, Zoe Randall.

"Unfortunately, as a result of being a hamster's home, the Chevrolet needs very extensive

work, including completely rewiring.

"The good news is that having spent the day sleeping in a cardboard box in my office recovering from his exploits, Sparky is now happily settled into his new cage at home with Zoe, where hopefully he will cause less damage."

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In 1939 a secretive cult known as the Royal Fraternity of Master Metaphysicians made headlines when its leader, James Bernard Schafer, announced their intention to conduct an unusual experiment. They were going to raise an immortal baby.

The infant that was to live forever was blue-eyed, red-haired Jean Gauntt. Her mother, New York City waitress Catherine Gauntt, had indicated that she was too poor to afford to raise Jean, so she gave Schafer permission to take charge of her. Catherine Gauntt was not a member of Schafer's organization.

The Master Metaphysicians didn't officially adopt Baby Jean, but they brought her into their luxurious Long Island mansion (the former Vanderbilt mansion, which they had renamed "Peace Haven") when she was three-months old, and they had complete control over every aspect of her life.

Baby Jean's home

Baby Jean was given a private nursery where, in addition to a nurse who attended her twenty-four hours a day, she was constantly watched over by Schafer's followers. The plan was to make her immortal by never allowing her to hear mention of death or disease. Nor would she be exposed to any "bad or destructive" thoughts. No unkind words would ever be spoken in her presence. She would eat an all-vegetarian "eternity diet." As she grew older, she would learn about alcohol, tobacco, coffee, tea, mustard, vinegar, and spices, but she would never consume any of them. She would receive constant instruction in the group's philosophy, becoming the embodiment of Schafer's belief that immortality "can be actually achieved, not as a ghost or spirit." When she was old enough she would assume control of the Royal Fraternity as its immortal leader.

Schafer boasted, "I can think of no child outside of royalty who might have had a better start in life."

Baby Jean in her nursery at the Vanderbilt Mansion, attended to by a nurse Schafer plays with Baby Jean Baby Jean celebrates her first six months of immortality

However, despite high hopes and grand promises, the experiment in immortality only lasted fifteen months. In December 1940, the Master Metaphysicians abruptly returned Baby Jean to her parents who were living in a New York rooming house.

Schafer attempted to put a positive spin on the experiment's end. He explained, "Now the parents have adjusted themselves and they want her back." In fact, Mrs. Gauntt had retained a lawyer who had sent an ultimatum to the Master Metaphysicians demanding the return of the child. This same lawyer was also representing clients who were suing the organization for fraud. Within days of Baby Jean's return, Schafer was in court defending himself against charges of grand larceny.

Schafer plays with Baby Jean Baby Jean celebrates her first six months of immortality

Baby Jean celebrates her first six months of immortality

Baby Jean was brought back to her parents' home by one of Schafer's followers. Schafer sent along detailed instructions so that the parents could maintain Jean on the "eternity diet." Schafer told the press, "Whether Jean goes on being immortal is for her parents to decide."

However, the Gauntts had no intention of raising an immortal child, and they immediately discarded the eternity diet. The press reported that within hours of her return Jean was happily consuming prunes -- a food that wasn't part of the diet.

James Schafer and the Master Metaphysicians

Baby Jean reunited with her mother

James B. Schafer

James Schafer created the Royal Fraternity of Master Metaphysicians in the 1920s. Although he was the leader of the organization, he called himself simply the "Messenger." He described its purpose as being, "the joyous work of helping others to help themselves." Time Magazine described it as "a theological goulash of Rosicrucianism, Christian Science, Christianity, Supermind Science, faith healing and How to Win Friends and Influence People."

Schafer made numerous remarkable claims. For instance, he boasted that he could automatically dematerialize persons or things that stood in his way. He also preached that illness and death were caused by destructive thinking.

By the late 1930s his organization had attracted thousands of followers, the majority of whom, reportedly, were middle-aged women. However, there was also an inner circle of male metaphysicians who called themselves "The Storks." They wore diaper pins as lapel emblems to identify each other.

There were rumors that Schafer enjoyed more than just the spiritual admiration of his followers. A witness later testified that it was common to see women members hugging and kissing Schafer. Schafer explained these actions by saing, "I can't deprive them of that. It's their aspirin."

Schafer grew quite wealthy. He raised money by selling "fellowship certificates" for a minimum price of $100 apiece. These certificates were accompanied by checks signed by Schafer and drawn on the "Inexhaustible Bank of the Infinite in Universal Mind." They were dated "Eternal Now," and were payable in the currency of "Ideas and Everything Desired With No Limitations." His followers could also give "love offerings" of $5. Children could join his "Cosmic Network," through which they could donate 1 cent stamps.

Schafer tried to shield his wealth by seeking tax-exempt status as a religious organization. However, the state Supreme Court ruled that there was nothing religious about his organization "except, possibly, the solicitation and receipt of funds."

Nevertheless, by 1938 Schafer had grown wealthy enough to purchase the 800-acre Vanderbilt Estate in Long Island as a retreat for himself and his followers. He renamed the 110-room mansion "Peace Haven." Then in 1939 he announced his intention to bring Jean Gauntt into the mansion and prepare her for everlasting life through metaphysics and a special diet.

These activities, as well as an increasing number of complaints from former members who claimed Schafer had conned them out of thousands of dollars, attracted the attention of the Attorney General. Criminal charges were brought against him in 1940. At the trial, the judge denounced him as "an admitted thief not unlike the horse thief of old." In 1942 he was sent to Sing Sing Prison to serve a sentence of up to five years. Schafer also lost his estate because he was unable to keep up with the payments. The estate is now owned by Dowling College.

What Became of Schafer and Baby Jean?

Upon release from prison, Schafer opened a correspondence school in metaphysics in upstate New York, and he published a magazine devoted to metaphysical issues. However, he never attained his former wealth or fame.

On April 26, 1955, Schafer and his wife Cecilia were found dead in their car on the grounds of his school. There was a suicide note on the seat beside them. They had killed themselves by running a vacuum cleaner hose from the engine through the floorboards, dying from carbon-monoxide poisoning. Schafer was 59. His wife was 55. The suicide note left detailed instructions for their daughter on how to continue operating the school. It also stated that they had "no other way out."

It was reported that, as of 2002, Jean Gauntt was still alive and well. She was said to be married with children of her own. However, she preferred not to publicly discuss her past history as the Immortal Baby.

Comments

I want to know if James Bernard Schafer was born in Fargo, ND, on the 14th of January either 1894 or 1895.

I have a record of a James Bernard Schafer born on that date who married Edna Hazel Diebel in Michigan in 1915, and in 1930 they are living in Queens NY, with their 2 children. I cannot find any census records for 1940 with this family.

The James Bernard Schafer that married Edna Diebel also was a battery manufacturer in 1919 in Michigan prior to moving to NY and was stopped from selling under his company name by the Federal Trade Commission due to illegal use of the company name.
Posted by coleen shaull in Michigan United states on Thu Nov 07, 2013 at 06:51 AM

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Jewish group asks French minister to rename Death to Jews hamlet

Agence France-Presse in Paris
Tuesday 12 August 2014
theguardian.com

Simon Wiesenthal Centre tells Bernard Cazeneuve it is shocked at existence of village named La Mort aux Juifs

Letter about the offensively named hamlet was sent to Bernard Cazeneuve. Photograph: Benoit Tessier/Reuters

A prominent Jewish group has sent a letter to France's interior minister to demand that a tiny hamlet south of Paris called Death to Jews be renamed.

The Simon Wiesenthal Centre's director of international affairs, Shimon Samuels, wrote to Bernard Cazeneuve, saying he was "shocked to discover the existence of a village in France officially called 'Death to Jews'. It is extremely shocking that this name has slipped under the radar in the 70 years that have passed since France was liberated from Nazism and the (pro-Nazi) Vichy regime," he wrote.

However, the deputy mayor of the village of Courtemaux, which has jurisdiction over the hamlet La Mort aux Juifs, 60 miles (100km) south of Paris, dismissed the concerns.

"It's ridiculous. This name has always existed," Marie-Elizabeth Secretand said. "No one has anything against the Jews, of course. It doesn't surprise me that this is coming up again."

Changing the name would require a decision by the municipal council, which Secretand said was unlikely. "Why change a name that goes back to the Middle Ages or even further? We should respect these old names.

"A previous municipal council, at least 20 years ago, already refused to change the name of this hamlet, which consists of a farm and two houses."

In May, residents of a village in Spain called Castrillo Matajudios (Castrillo Kill Jews), voted to change the name.

In a tight referendum, the citizens opted for the less offensive, older name for the town, Castrillo Mota de Judios (Castrillo Hill of the Jews).

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Walking the dogs yesterday by a small pond, I noticed how green the pond surface was, choked with small leaves of pond weed. A memory of something my grandmother used to say came into my head "careful or Jinny Greenteeth will get you". Jinny Greenteeth used to haunt her waterbutt in the garden, and the old canal that ran by her house. Jinny Greenteeth was the pond weed that turned the water surface green. I hadn't thought about Jinny Greenteeth for years, in fact I couldn't remember anyone but my grandmother ever mentioning her. I wondered where the name came from, was it something my grandmother had dreamt up to warn me or did other people think of Jinny Greenteeth.

As always, google was the first place to turn, and I wasn't disappointed. Apparently Jinny, or Ginny or Jenny is well known in folklore.

Jenny Greenteeth:
Found: North of England, in cold or murky waters
How to recognise it: A green-skinned, frog-eyed, needle-toothed hag. Difficult to spot, however – she is usually hidden beneath the surface by murk or duckweed
What NOT to do: Do not frolic carelessly on the brink of wells, marshes, murky ponds, weed-choked pools, etc. Jenny Greenteeth will pull you into the water and eat you. Again, she considers children something of a delicacy.
(http://www.franceshardinge.com/library/verdigrisdeep/verdigrisdeep_bestiary.html)

if you go walking by any pool, pond or river at night, be on the lookout for Jenny Greenteeth. She is most dangerous for those who are not careful by open water, as she lives beneath the surface on the muddy bottom and feeds upon the unwary. Her lithe form darts back and forth like a fish and with pale green skin and long dark green hair she is no beauty.

Jenny Greenteeth can be found all over the British Isles in many different forms. In Lancashire she is Jinny Greenteeth, in Cheshire and Shropshire she was known as Wicked Jenny, Ginny Greenteeth and Peg o' Nell, while in Durham she was Peg Powler1. Hebden in Yorkshire has Thor's Well (or Thrushkeld), where Jenny haunts waiting to drag small children in if they go too near the edge and in Cornwall she has a close relative in the bucca-boo, a water spirit that haunted moors and ponds.
(BBC folklore)

There does seem to be a link between witches or evil spirits of some form living in secluded pools and waterways across Europe. Clearly Jinny Greenteeth is a part of this tradition.

It is not surprising, therefore, that as well as Jenny Greenteeth lurking in the depths of the pond, the spirits of some past inhabitants are said to haunt the Park. Generations of gardeners have told stories of ghosts seen walking in the grounds, and one young lad was very indignant when his cap was snatched from his head near Synagogue Well and found abandoned in the grounds the next day.
(Frodsham history, Cheshire, 2007)

The Witches Pool near Flint Mountain also springs to mind as an example. I am not totally convinced by the claim in some accounts that this derives from Celtic beliefs concerning water gods and goddesses. These deities are also linked in some accounts to the beliefs associated to the numerous holy wells in England and Wales. I understand there is a vigorous debate over the survival of beliefs unchanged from pre Christian times or whether these have been revived in the medieval period. I should return to this in the future.

Jinny has been immortalised in song, fiction and even become a character in the Monsters in my pocket series. So she wasn't invented by my grandmother, but is part of a strong folk tradition in this part of the world. I shall remember to treat the ponds and waterways with more respect and make sure not to frolic too close to the edge as I walk the dogs in future; Jinny isn't a character to treat lightly.

One of the most famous legends in Kentucky is the story of a lost fortune buried somewhere in the hills near the Red River Gorge. In the 18th Century, an Englishman named John Swift is supposed to have travelled across the Appalachian Frontier and discovered a silver mine. The location of Swift's mine has been lost, and despite treasure hunters scouring the hills of Kentucky for over 200 years, has yet to be rediscovered. Some people say that Swift himself still walks the hills of Kentucky, searching for his lost fortune.

In the 1760s, an Englishman named Jonathan Swift claims to have travelled through Kentucky into the Ohio River Valley, trading with members of the Shawnee nation and searching for evidence of mineral wealth. Swift claimed that on one of these trips, while pursuing a wounded bear int a cave, he stumbled upon a rich vein of silver running through the cave. Swift concealed the mine, then returned a few months later with the equipment to set up a mining and refining operation.

Over the next nine years, Swift returned time and time again to the mine. During that time, he is said to have left large amounts of silver buried around the area.

There are several different accounts of Swift's final years at the mine. Some say that he faced an insurrection from his work crew and had to flee the mine. Others say that Swift himself murdered his own crew in cold blood while they were sleeping on his last trip out to Kentucky. Whatever happened, the stories agree that Swift went to great lengths to conceal the entrance to the mine when he left for what would be the final time. Swift went blind soon after his last visit to the mine and spent his final years living with a Mrs. Renfro in Bean's Station, Tennessee. Unable to return to the mine himself, upon his death Swift left Mrs. Renfro his journal, which contained a map of where to find the mine and its hidden wealth.

Despite the details supplied in the journal, for over 200 years treasure hunters have been unable to locate the lost mine. Countless expeditions have been made throughout Eastern Kentucky in search of the lost treasure.

Perhaps the area with the best claim to be holding the lost mine is in Wolfe County, in the area around what's known as Swift's Creek. Not only does the area seem to match the descriptions in Swift's journal but the presence of the lost mine may be attested to by some spectral evidence as well.

For nearly two centuries, hunters and hikers in the back woods of Wolfe County have reported seeing a strange, ghostly figure wandering the hills. The figure appears to be a man dressed in buckskins and a tricorn hat, appearing every bit the 18th Century woodsman and explorer.

But what's most strange about the ghost is that it appears to be blind. Those that have seen it say that it moves at a stumbling pace, with its hands extended in front of it, as if it has to feel its way through the wilderness

There are those that say that this is the spirit of John Swift himself, returned from the grave in an attempt to find his lost mine. There are others who think that this may be Swift's eternal punishment for murdering his crew, that he is condemned to be forever searching fir and forever unable to locate the treasure that drove him to murder.

If you're inclined to go out to Wolfe County to see if you can find the ghost, or if you want to try your luck at finding the lost mine, a good time to go would be during the annual Wolfe County Silver Mine Festival, held every year in celebration of the legend.

And anyone locating the mine after reading this story is encouraged to make a donation to the upkeep of this web site.

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Behavioral Responses to Mammalian Blood Odor and a Blood Odor Component in Four Species of Large Carnivores

Sara Nilsson[1], Johanna Sjöberg[1], Mats Amundin[2], Constanze Hartmann[3], Andrea Buettner[3], Matthias Laska[1]*

1 Department of Physics, Chemistry and Biology, Linköping University, Linköping, Sweden, **2** Kolmården Wildlife Park, Kolmården, Sweden, **3** Department of Chemistry and Pharmacy, Friedrich-Alexander-Universität Erlangen-Nürnberg, Erlangen, Germany

Abstract

Only little is known about whether single volatile compounds are as efficient in eliciting behavioral responses in animals as the whole complex mixture of a behaviorally relevant odor. Recent studies analysing the composition of volatiles in mammalian blood, an important prey-associated odor stimulus for predators, found the odorant trans-4,5-epoxy-(E)-2-decenal to evoke a typical "metallic, blood-like" odor quality in humans. We therefore assessed the behavior of captive Asian wild dogs *(Cuon alpinus)*, African wild dogs *(Lycaon pictus)*, South American bush dogs *(Speothos venaticus)*, and Siberian tigers *(Panthera tigris altaica)* when presented with wooden logs that were impregnated either with mammalian blood or with the blood odor component trans-4,5-epoxy-(E)-2-decenal, and compared it to their behavior towards a fruity odor (iso-pentyl acetate) and a near-odorless solvent (diethyl phthalate) as control. We found that all four species displayed significantly more interactions with the odorized wooden logs such as sniffing, licking, biting, pawing, and toying, when they were impregnated with the two prey-associated odors compared to the two non-prey-associated odors. Most importantly, no significant differences were found in the number of interactions with the wooden logs impregnated with mammalian blood and the blood odor component in any of the four species. Only one of the four species, the South American bush dogs, displayed a significant decrease in the number of interactions with the odorized logs across the five sessions performed per odor stimulus. Taken together, the results demonstrate that a single blood odor component can be as efficient in eliciting behavioral responses in large carnivores as the odor of real blood, suggesting that trans-4,5-epoxy-(E)-2-decenal may be perceived by predators as a "character impact compound" of mammalian blood odor. Further, the results suggest that odorized wooden logs are a suitable manner of environmental enrichment for captive carnivores.

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* Email: malas@ifm.liu.se

Introduction

The hunting behavior of a variety of mammalian predators suggests that they may use the odor of blood to home in on wounded prey [1–3]. The behavior of mammalian prey species, in turn, suggests that the odor of conspecific blood may serve as a warning signal and elicits adaptive behavioral responses such as increased vigilance or flight [4–8]. The odor of blood may also be an important indicator of the reproductive status in female mammals [9]. Furthermore, mammalian prey species have been observed to display behavioral responses to heterospecific blood odors [10,11] suggesting that there may be a common olfactory motive in mammalian blood odor that is recognized across species.

Despite the presumed importance of blood odors for both predator/prey relationships and intraspecific chemical communication, surprisingly little is known about the volatiles that comprise the odor of blood in mammals, and even less is known about the constituents of blood odor that elicit behavioral responses in predators and/or prey species. Such knowledge, however, would be useful for both theoretical and practical purposes: it would, for example, allow ethologists to better understand the chemosensory dimension of predator/prey relationships and of intraspecific chemical communication [3]. It would also allow olfactory researchers to further explore the concept of "key compounds" in naturally occurring odor mixtures [12]. Finally, it may allow for the development of more effective chemical repellents, for example along highways or around plantations [13], or more effective environmental enrichment for captive carnivores [14].

Using sophisticated chemo-analytical methods such as gas chromatography-mass spectrometry (GC-MS) and gas chromatography-olfactometry (GC-O), a recent study analyzed the composition of volatiles in mammalian blood and found one substance, trans-4,5-epoxy-(E)-2-decenal, to evoke a typical "metallic, blood-like" odor quality in humans [15]. Humans are extremely sensitive to this odorant and have an extraordinarily low

detection threshold of 0.078 ppt –0.33 ppt (parts per trillion) for this aldehyde [16].

It was therefore the aim of the present study (1) to assess behavioral responses of four large carnivore species to mammalian blood odor and to the mammalian blood odor component trans-4,5-epoxy-(E)-2-decenal, (2) to compare their behavioral responses to those towards a fruity odor and a near-odorless control, (3) to compare the behavioral responses between the four species, and (4) to assess the suitability of these odor stimuli as environmental enrichment for captive carnivores.

Materials and Methods

Ethics Statement

The experiments reported here comply with the *Guide for the Care and Use of Laboratory Animals* (National Institutes of Health Publication no. 86-23, revised 1985) and also with current Swedish laws. They were performed according to a protocol approved by the ethical board of the Swedish Board of Agriculture (Jordbruksverket, protocol # 31-2647/10).

Animals

The study was conducted at Kolmården Wildlife Park, near Norrköping, Sweden. The four species studied were:

Asian wild dogs *(Cuon alpinus)*. A group of 12 animals, comprising seven females and five males ranging from 1–8 years of age, was observed. The group was composed of one breeding pair plus their offspring. The Asian wild dogs, also known as dholes, were housed in an outdoor enclosure of 2900 m^2 which contained dens, trees, bushes, and rocks, but mainly consisted of open grassland with a 0.5 m deep water moat along one of its sides.

African wild dogs *(Lycaon pictus)*. A group of 12 animals, comprising one female and eleven males ranging from 2–9 years of age, was observed. Nine of the eleven males were offspring of the female. The African wild dogs, also known as painted dogs, were housed in an outdoor enclosure of 5200 m^2 which consisted of a rocky area in the center with surrounding open grassland areas.

South American bush dogs *(Speothos venaticus)*. A group of 10 animals, comprising five females and five males ranging from 1–6 years of age, was observed. The group was composed of one breeding pair plus their offspring. The South American bush dogs were housed in an outdoor enclosure of 1000 m^2 which contained dens, trees, bushes, and rocks, but mainly consisted of open grassland.

Siberian tigers *(Panthera tigris altaica)*. A group of 6 animals, comprising three females and three males ranging from 2–11 years of age, was observed. One of the males was the father of the three females and of one of the males, and he was the brother of the remaining male. The Siberian tigers were housed in an outdoor enclosure of 4800 m^2 which contained dens, trees, rocks, an area with steep rocky cliffs, and an area with open grassland with both an artificial stream and a water moat along one of its sides.

The outdoor enclosures of all four species were connected to indoor enclosures into which the animals were locked in for cleaning the outdoor enclosures and for removing the odor stimuli after the end of an experimental day.

Odor stimuli

The four odor stimuli used were:

Blood from a domestic horse *(Equus caballus)*. The rationale for using horse blood was that horse meat is a regular part of the food that all four carnivore species studied here are provided with at Kolmården Wildlife Park. The blood was collected in April 2012 directly after the horse was euthanized and immediately deep-frozen in aliquots of 0.5 ml at –20°C. On the morning of each testing day, five aliquots of horse blood were thawed and warmed up to approximately 25°C.

Trans-4,5-epoxy-(E)-2-decenal (CAS# 134454-31-2). This odorant has been identified as a volatile component in mammalian blood and evokes a typical "metallic, blood-like" odor quality in humans [15]. It was presented at a dilution of 1:100 (in diethyl phthalate) from a stock solution of 5 mg/ml.

iso-pentyl acetate (CAS# 123-92-2). This odorant has been identified as a volatile component in a variety of fruits and evokes a typical "banana-like" odor quality in humans [17]. It was presented at a dilution of 1:1,000 (in diethyl phthalate).

Diethyl phthalate (CAS# 84-66-2). This organic solvent is near-odorless and was used both for diluting the two monomolecular odorants mentioned above and as a blank stimulus.

The concentrations mentioned above for the blood odor component and for the fruity odor were chosen in order to provide stimuli that were clearly detectable for humans, but not overwhelmingly strong so that a relatively close contact to the odor source was necessary to detect them.

Experimental procedure

The four different odor stimuli were presented to the animals using wooden (spruce) logs of 48×7×4.5 cm. Each log was impregnated with 0.5 ml of a given odor stimulus immediately prior to each presentation. The odor stimulus was applied on the two largest surfaces of a log using a micropipette and then spread over the surface using a paint brush. Plastic gloves were used whenever the logs were handled to avoid that they were contaminated with human odor. Five logs, impregnated with the same odor stimulus, were used during a given experimental day.

At the start of each experimental day, five freshly odorized wooden logs were thrown into the outdoor enclosure of a species. Care was taken to present the wooden logs to the animals at positions that differed between experimental days and, at the same time, allowed the experimenter to see all five logs at least at the start of the observation. Immediately after the logs were put in place, the animals were allowed access into the outdoor enclosure and were observed for three hours in the morning and three hours in the afternoon (between 08:00 a.m. and 16:00 p.m.). Experiments were only performed on non-rainy days to prevent the odor stimuli from being washed away by the rain. Similarly, experiments were only performed on non-feeding days to prevent the animals from losing interest for the wooden logs due to the presence of food and postprandial inactivity. At least two days were interspersed between consecutive presentations of odorized wooden logs with a given species and care was taken to remove used logs from an enclosure prior to the start of the next presentation. Each of the four odor stimuli was presented to each of the four species for a total of five times in a pseudo-randomized order which resulted in a total of 20 experimental days per species. The experiments were carried out between May and October 2012 (with the South American bush dogs and the Siberian tigers), and between May and October 2013 (with the Asian wild dogs and the African wild dogs).

Continuous sampling was used to record the occurrence of each interaction with a wooden log which was visible to the experimenter. A total of ten behaviors involving different kinds of interaction with or immediate behavioral responses to the inspection of an odorized wooden log were considered (Table 1). During one experimental day per odor stimulus and species, the duration of the behaviors was also recorded using a stopwatch.

Figure 1 illustrates some of the behaviors considered in the present study.

Table 1. Ethogram of all behaviors considered in the present study.

functional term	description
sniffing	using the nose to investigate a wooden log
licking	using the tongue to investigate a wooden log
biting	using the teeth to investigate a wooden log
pawing	using the paw or claws to scratch a wooden log
toying	moving or otherwise manipulating a wooden log
flehmen	curling of the upper lip and "grimacing" when investigating a wooden log
self-impregnating	rubbing the face or other body part at a wooden log
scent-marking	urinating or defecating or spraying onto a wooden log
orientating	turning head (or ears or eyes) following an interaction with a wooden log
vocalizing	producing sounds during or following an interaction with a wooden log

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Data analysis

Differences in the frequency of occurrence of behavioral responses between odor stimuli and between species were assessed using the Chi-square test. Between-species comparisons in the duration of behavioral responses were performed using the Mann-Whitney U-test for independent samples. Within-species comparisons of the duration of behavioral responses were performed using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test for related samples. Correlational

Figure 1. Some of the behaviors considered in the present study. *upper left*: an African wild dog *(Lycaon pictus)* sniffing at an odorized wooden log; *upper right*: two Asian wild dogs *(Cuon alpinus)* biting an odorized wooden log; *lower left*: a South American bush dog *(Speothos venaticus)* performing flehmen on an odorized wooden log; *lower right*: a Siberian tiger *(Panthera tigris altaica)* "toying" with (in this case: carrying) an odorized wooden log.
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analyses were performed by calculating Spearman rank-order coefficients r_s which were teseted for significance by computing z-scores. As the number of animals differed between species, we calculated the number of interactions per animal by dividing the total number of interactions observed in a given species by the number of animals.

Results

Asian wild dogs

Across the 20 experimental days, a total of 458 interactions with the odorized logs was observed. Sniffing was, by far, the most frequently displayed behavior and accounted for 54.6% of all observations, followed by biting (26.0%) and toying (12.4% of all observations). Three of the behaviors, flehmen, scent-marking, and vocalizing were not observed at all (Table 2).

A comparison between the four odor stimuli showed that the Asian wild dogs displayed a significantly higher number of interactions with the odorized logs when presented with the real blood odor compared to the fruity odor ($\chi^2 = 15.02$, $P<0.0001$) and the blank control ($\chi^2 = 29.49$, $P<0.0001$). Similarly, the animals displayed a significantly higher number of interactions when presented with the blood odor component compared to the fruity odor ($\chi^2 = 17.86$, $P<0.0001$) and the blank control ($\chi^2 = 33.39$, $P<0.0001$). There was no significant difference in the number of interactions between the real blood odor and the blood odor component ($\chi^2 = 0.07$, $P = 0.786$), and between the fruity odor and the blank control ($\chi^2 = 2.10$, $P = 0.147$), respectively.

African wild dogs

A total of 647 interactions with the odorized logs was observed across the 20 experimental days. Sniffing was, by far, the most frequently displayed behavior and accounted for 64.3% of all observations, followed by licking (16.5%) and biting (12.4% of all observations). Four of the behaviors, flehmen, scent-marking, orientating, and vocalizing were not observed at all (Table 3).

A comparison between the four odor stimuli showed that the African wild dogs displayed a significantly higher number of interactions with the odorized logs when presented with the real blood odor compared to the blank control ($\chi^2 = 4.31$, $P = 0.038$), but not to the fruity odor ($\chi^2 = 0.31$, $P = 0.575$). In contrast, the animals displayed a significantly higher number of interactions when presented with the blood odor component compared to the fruity odor ($\chi^2 = 30.01$, $P<0.0001$), the blank control ($\chi^2 = 48.78$, $P<0.0001$), and the real blood odor ($\chi^2 = 23.37$, $P<0.0001$). There was no significant difference in the number of interactions between the fruity odor and the blank control ($\chi^2 = 2.04$, $P = 0.154$).

South American bush dogs

Across the 20 experimental days, a total of 1582 interactions with the odorized logs was observed. Sniffing was, by far, the most frequently displayed behavior and accounted for 82.5% of all observations, followed by biting (6.6%) and orientating (4.6% of all observations). Two of the behaviors, self-impregnating and vocalizing were not observed at all (Table 4).

A comparison between the four odor stimuli showed that the South American bush dogs displayed a significantly higher number of interactions with the odorized logs when presented with the real blood odor compared to the fruity odor ($\chi^2 = 35.44$, $P<0.0001$) and the blank control ($\chi^2 = 67.41$, $P<0.0001$). Similarly, the animals displayed a significantly higher number of interactions when presented with the blood odor component compared to the fruity odor ($\chi^2 = 30.70$, $P<0.0001$) and the blank control ($\chi^2 = 60.82$, $P<0.0001$). There was no significant difference in the number of interactions between the real blood odor and the blood odor component ($\chi^2 = 0.14$, $P = 0.712$). Finally, the number of interactions with the odorized logs was significantly higher when the animals were presented with the fruity odor compared to the blank control ($\chi^2 = 4.86$, $P = 0.028$).

Siberian tigers

A total of 392 interactions with the odorized logs was observed across the 20 experimental days. Sniffing was, by far, the most frequently displayed behavior and accounted for 49.7% of all observations, followed by biting (14.5%) and toying (11.2% of all observations). Only one of the behaviors, vocalizing, was not observed at all (Table 5).

A comparison between the four odor stimuli showed that the Siberian tigers displayed a significantly higher number of interactions with the odorized logs when presented with the real blood odor compared to the fruity odor ($\chi^2 = 47.41$, $P<0.0001$) and the blank control ($\chi^2 = 53.31$, $P<0.0001$). Similarly, the animals displayed a significantly higher number of interactions when presented with the blood odor component compared to the fruity odor ($\chi^2 = 45.85$, $P<0.0001$) and the blank control

Table 2. Number of interactions with the odorized logs in Asian wild dogs (n = 12).

behavior	real blood	blood component	fruity odor	blank control	Total
sniffing	75	110	41	24	250
licking	17	3	0	0	20
biting	51	28	24	16	119
pawing	2	3	1	0	6
toying	13	23	10	11	57
flehmen	0	0	0	0	0
self-impregnating	2	2	0	0	4
scent-marking	0	0	0	0	0
orientating	1	1	0	0	2
vocalizing	0	0	0	0	0
Total	161	170	76	51	458

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Table 3. Number of interactions with the odorized logs in African wild dogs (n = 12).

behavior	real blood	blood component	fruity odor	blank control	Total
sniffing	104	173	85	54	416
licking	10	47	32	18	107
biting	14	44	7	15	80
pawing	1	1	0	0	2
toying	13	8	3	4	28
flehmen	0	0	0	0	0
self-impregnating	0	10	0	4	14
scent-marking	0	0	0	0	0
orientating	0	0	0	0	0
vocalizing	0	0	0	0	0
Total	142	283	127	95	647

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($\chi^2 = 51.67$, $P<0.0001$). There was no significant difference in the number of interactions between the real blood odor and the blood odor component ($\chi^2 = 0.01$, $P = 0.969$), and between the fruity odor and the blank control ($\chi^2 = 0.07$, $P = 0.789$), respectively.

Comparison between species

The four predator species differed in their total number of interactions with the odorized wooden logs (see Tables 2–5). However, as the number of animals that we studied differed between the four species, we have to consider the number of recorded interactions with an odorized log *per animal* for between-species comparisons.

The South American bush dogs displayed the highest number of interactions with the odorized logs with 158 interactions per animal, and the Asian wild dogs displayed the lowest number of interactions with the odorized wooden logs with only 38 interactions per animal. The Siberian tigers and the African wild dogs fell in between with 65 and 54 interactions with the odorized logs per animal, respectively. Accordingly, the South American bush dogs displayed a significantly higher number of interactions with the odorized logs per animal compared to the three other species ($\chi^2 \geq 19.41$, $P<0.0001$ with all three comparisons). In contrast, the African wild dogs, the Asian wild dogs, and the Siberian tigers did not differ significantly in their number of interactions with the odorized logs per animal ($\chi^2 \leq 3.09$, $P>0.05$ with all three comparisons).

In all four species sniffing was the most frequently displayed behavior and accounted for at least 49% (Siberian tigers) and up to 82% (South American bush dogs) of all observations. Similarly, in all four species licking, biting, pawing, and toying were among the next most frequently displayed behaviors and together with sniffing these five behaviors accounted for more than 90% of all observations. Finally, vocalizing during or following an interaction with an odorized log was not observed in any of the four species. Accordingly, the rankings from most frequent to least frequent behaviors correlated positively between all four species (Spearman, $+0.41 \leq r_s \leq +0.93$ with all six comparisons), and in four of the six cases this correlation was even statistically significant (Asian wild dogs vs. African wild dogs: $r_s = +0.93$, $P = 0.0052$; Asian wild dogs vs. Siberian Tigers: $r_s = +0.91$, $P = 0.0063$; African wild dogs vs. Siberian tigers: $r_s = +0.76$, $P = 0.0222$; South American bush dogs vs. Siberian tigers: $r_s = +0.77$, $P = 0.0201$).

Duration of interactions

Table 6 summarizes the average duration of interactions with the odorized logs in the four species. The Siberian tigers displayed

Table 4. Number of interactions with the odorized logs in South American bush dogs (n = 10).

behavior	real blood	blood component	fruity odor	blank control	Total
sniffing	467	371	261	206	1305
licking	6	2	2	0	10
biting	17	70	9	9	105
pawing	2	8	0	0	10
toying	5	40	6	1	52
flehmen	9	0	1	0	10
self-impregnating	0	0	0	0	0
scent-marking	7	1	8	2	18
orientating	27	29	10	6	72
vocalizing	0	0	0	0	0
Total	540	521	297	224	1582

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Table 5. Number of interactions with the odorized logs in Siberian tigers (n = 6).

behavior	real blood	blood component	fruity odor	blank control	Total
sniffing	64	93	16	22	195
licking	22	12	1	1	36
biting	31	17	7	2	57
pawing	22	15	4	2	43
toying	21	15	6	2	44
flehmen	1	2	0	0	3
self-impregnating	1	0	0	0	1
scent-marking	1	0	0	0	1
orientating	3	9	0	0	12
vocalizing	0	0	0	0	0
Total	166	163	34	29	392

doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0112694.t005

significantly longer interactions with the odorized logs compared to the three other species (Mann-Whitney U-test, $P<0.05$ with all three comparisons). This was true both when considering the four odor stimuli together and when considering the real blood odor, the blood odor component, and the fruity odor separately. In contrast, the Asian wild dogs, African wild dogs, and South American bush dogs did not differ significantly in the duration of their interactions with the odorized logs (Mann-Whitney U-test, $P>0.05$ with all three comparisons).

The South American bush dogs and the Siberian tigers spent a significantly longer time per interaction with the odorized logs when presented with the real blood odor compared to the other three stimuli (Wilcoxon, $P<0.05$ with all three comparisons per species). The African wild dogs displayed significantly longer interactions with the odorized logs when they were impregnated with the real blood odor or the blood odor component compared to the fruity odor (Wilcoxon, $P<0.05$ with both comparisons), but not with the blank control (Wilcoxon, $P>0.05$). The Asian wild dogs did not differ in the duration of interactions with the odorized logs with any of the four stimuli (Wilcoxon, $P>0.05$ with all six comparisons).

Variability between sessions

Figure 2 illustrates the number of interactions with the odorized logs per animal across the five sessions performed per odor stimulus and species. In all four species, and with all four odor stimuli, a considerable session-to-session variability in the number of interactions per animal was observed. Correlational analyses showed a significant decrease in the number of interactions per animal across sessions in the South American bush dogs (Spearman $r_s=-0.54$, $P=0.0193$), but not in the Asian wild dogs, African wild dogs, and Siberian tigers (Spearman, $-0.44\leq r_s\leq -0.24$, $P>0.05$ with all three correlations).

Discussion

The results of the present study demonstrate that a single blood odor component can be as efficient in eliciting behavioral responses in large carnivores as the odor of real blood. Further, the results show that all four predator species tested here responded differently to prey-associated odors and non-prey-associated odors, respectively. Finally, the results suggest that odorized wooden logs are a suitable manner of environmental enrichment for captive carnivores.

Our finding that trans-4,5-epoxy-(E)-2-decenal was at least as efficient in eliciting behavioral responses in large carnivores as the odor of real blood is not trivial considering that there are hardly any examples so far showing that animals may respond in the same manner to a single food odor component as they do to the real complex odor of a food item. Combined analytical and sensory studies in humans have shown that the complex odor of some, but not all, foods is characterized by so-called "key compounds" (sometimes also referred to as "character impact compounds") [12]. However, when presented alone, these "key compounds" often resemble, but hardly ever are perceived as being identical with the natural complex odor of the food, thus emphasizing the importance of other components of the mixture as contributors to the odor "gestalt" and identifiability of a food item [18,19].

In animal studies, nonhuman primates showed no indication at all of associating "key compounds" of natural food items such as acetic esters or monoterpene alcohols found in the odor of tropical fruits with the food items themselves [20–22]. Rather, the animals

Table 6. Duration of interactions with the odorized logs (in seconds).

species	real blood	blood component	fruity odor	blank control	Total
Asian wild dogs	4.7±3.0	3.6±2.6	3.9±3.1	4.3±3.6	4.2±2.9
African wild dogs	3.6±1.8	4. 2±3.0	2.7±2.2	4.6±4.3	3.8±3.0
Bush dogs	7.8±7.7	3.2±4.0	3.7±3.3	3.0±2.1	5.6±3.5
Siberian tigers	17.4±7.1	6.2±4.0	7.6±6.6	1.8±0.5	12.6±7.1

given are mean values ± standard deviations.

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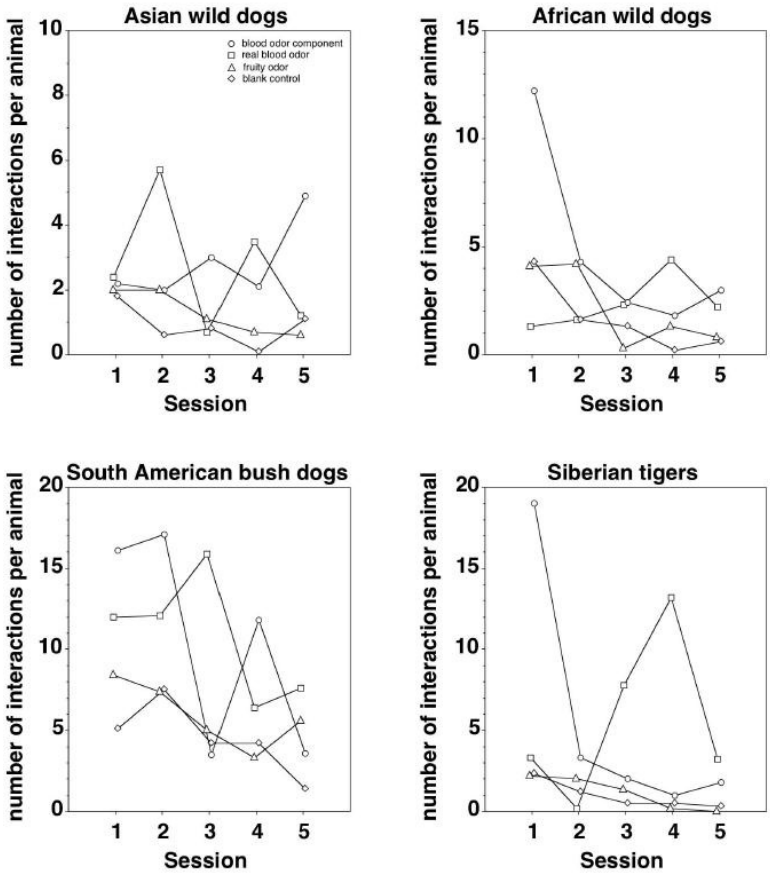

Figure 2. The number of interactions with the odorized logs per animal across the five sessions performed per odor stimulus and species. circles: blood odor component (trans-4,5-epoxy-(E)-2-decenal); squares: real blood odor (horse blood); triangle: fruity odor (iso-pentyl acetate); diamond: blank control (diethyl phthalate).
doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0112694.g002

behaved in the same manner as towards other monomolecular odorants that are found in the same fruits, but belong to different chemical classes and are considered not to be "character impact compounds" [23,24], or to non-food-associated odorants [25].

The same phenomenon that single components of behaviorally relevant odors are usually less effective in animals than the complex odor mixture they are normally part of has been reported repeatedly with predator odors and pheromones: the natural body, faecal or urine odors of predators are usually more effective in eliciting avoidance responses in prey species compared to single components of these odors [26,27]. Testosterone-dependent volatiles from the urine of male mice that increase aggression among males have been found to be perceptible, but behaviorally ineffective when presented to mice in an aqueous solution and thus outside of a complex urine background odor [28].

Although we cannot be sure that the four predator species tested here indeed associated the odor of trans-4,5-epoxy-(E)-2-decenal with prey or perceived it – similar to humans – as "blood-like", at the moment this is the most straightforward interpretation of our results. This notion is supported by our finding that three of our four species responded in the same manner to both real horse blood and to the blood odor component – with the fourth species even displaying more interactions with the former compared to the latter stimulus – and differently to the two non-prey-associated odors (the fruity iso-pentyl acetate and the solvent diethyl phthalate). This, too, is not a trivial finding if we consider that mammalian carnivores are known to strongly rely on their sense of smell and therefore generally display a high interest in odor stimuli in their environment [3,29]. Further, a number of carnivores, particularly members of the canid family, have been reported to regularly self-impregnate with smelly material that is not food-associated [30–32]. Additional support for the notion that the four predator species of the present study may indeed have associated the odor of trans-4,5-epoxy-(E)-2-decenal with prey comes from the following observation: all four species tended to guard or to rest close to (or even on top of) odorized wooden logs when they were impregnated with the real blood odor or the blood odor component, but not when they were impregnated with the fruity odor or the blank control (Figure 3). Interestingly, the animals showed a similar behavior on feeding days and tended to guard or rest close to left-overs of their food such as bones.

Future studies are needed to elucidate whether other blood odor components may be equally effective as trans-4,5-epoxy-(E)-2-decenal in eliciting behavioral responses in carnivores or whether this odorant is perhaps indeed the character impact compound of

Figure 3. Guarding of or resting close to odorized wooden logs impregnated with either real blood odor or with the blood odor component trans-4,5-epoxy-(E)-2-decenal. *upper left*: an African wild dog *(Lycaon pictus)*; *upper right*: two Asian wild dogs *(Cuon alpinus)*; *lower left*: a South American bush dog *(Speothos venaticus)*; *lower right*: a Siberian tiger *(Panthera tigris altaica)*.
doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0112694.g003

mammalian blood odor, not only in humans [15,16], but also in nonhuman mammals.

Our finding that the South American bush dogs displayed a significantly higher number of interactions with the odorized logs per animal compared to the other three species raises the question as to possible reasons underlying this difference. Although we cannot rule out the possibility that between-species differences in overall interest in odor stimuli or in behavioral relevance of olfactory information for a given species may account for our data, this seems unlikely because all four species studied here are known to rely on their sense of smell in a variety of behavioral contexts such as hunting and food selection, social communication, mate choice, reproduction, kin recognition, and territoriality [33–36]. Rather, it could well be that differences in relative enclosure size might explain the observed between-species difference in the number of interactions with the odorized logs. This notion is supported by the fact that the South American bush dogs had the smallest relative enclosure size with 100 m^2 per animal and thus they had clearly the highest statistical chance of finding or being close to the odorized logs and thus to interact with them. The Siberian tigers, in contrast, had the largest relative enclosure size with 800 m^2 per animal. Another possible explanation for our finding that the South American bush dogs displayed significantly more interactions with the odorized logs per animal than the Asian wild dogs, the African wild dogs, and the Siberian tigers is that these species may differ in their overall activity levels in captivity.

We also found that the four predator species differed in the average duration of the interactions with the odorized logs. The Siberian tigers displayed significantly longer interactions with the odorized logs than the other three predator species (see Table 6). Here, too, it seems unlikely that this finding reflects between-species differences in overall interest in odor stimuli or in behavioral relevance of olfactory information for a given species. Rather, these differences may simply reflect the fact that the Siberian tigers displayed the highest proportion of behaviors such as toying and biting (see Tables 1–4) which in all four species lasted longer on average than sniffing, for example.

Finally, the results of the present study suggest that odorized wooden logs are a suitable manner of environmental enrichment for captive predators. This, too, is not a trivial finding if we consider that inactivity or stereotypies are a big problem for zoos keeping large mammalian predators [37].

Environmental enrichment is commonly defined as "an animal husbandry practice that aims to increase species-specific behaviors, increase explorative and interactive behaviors with the environment and reduce abnormal behaviors of captive animals" [38]. A review of olfactory-based enrichment attempts in zoos reported that the presentation of olfactory stimuli can indeed stimulate explorative behaviors and reduce inactivity in a variety of species including large carnivores [14]. However, it was also found that the success of olfactory enrichment may strongly depend on the type of odor used and on the mode of odor presentation and its spatial and temporal distribution. Inappropriate odor stimuli or a continuous odor presentation may be counterproductive and even lead to increased levels of stereotypy and neophobia [39].

The wooden logs used in the present study turned out to be a particularly suitable way of presenting odor stimuli as environmental enrichment for captive predators as they allowed the

animals to move the odorized objects and to interact with them in multiple ways (see Figure 1) which would not have been possible if stationary objects such as rocks would have been impregnated with an odor stimulus. Further, the use of wooden logs which can easily be removed from an enclosure (again, as opposed to stationary objects) allowed us to control the temporal distribution of odor presentations and thus to avoid habituation to a given stimulus. In this context it is important to mention that only one of the four species tested here displayed a significant decrease in the number of interactions with the odorized logs across sessions (see Figure 2) and that, in all four species, the number of interactions with the odorized logs did not go down to zero even on the 20th and last test day of testing. None of the four odor stimuli employed here led to an apparent increase in undesirable behaviors such as stereotypies or neophobia, but rather had the desired effect of increasing explorative behaviors and interaction with the environment. We therefore conclude that the presentation of odorized wooden logs is a suitable, cheap and easily applicable manner of environmental enrichment for captive carnivores that may contribute to a sustainable increase in animal welfare, particularly when a larger number of odor stimuli and a pseudorandomized scheme of presentation is employed.

Acknowledgments

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Author Contributions

Conceived and designed the experiments: ML SN JS MA. Performed the experiments: SN JS. Analyzed the data: ML SN JS MA CH AB. Contributed reagents/materials/analysis tools: ML MA CH AB. Contributed to the writing of the manuscript: ML SN JS MA CH AB.

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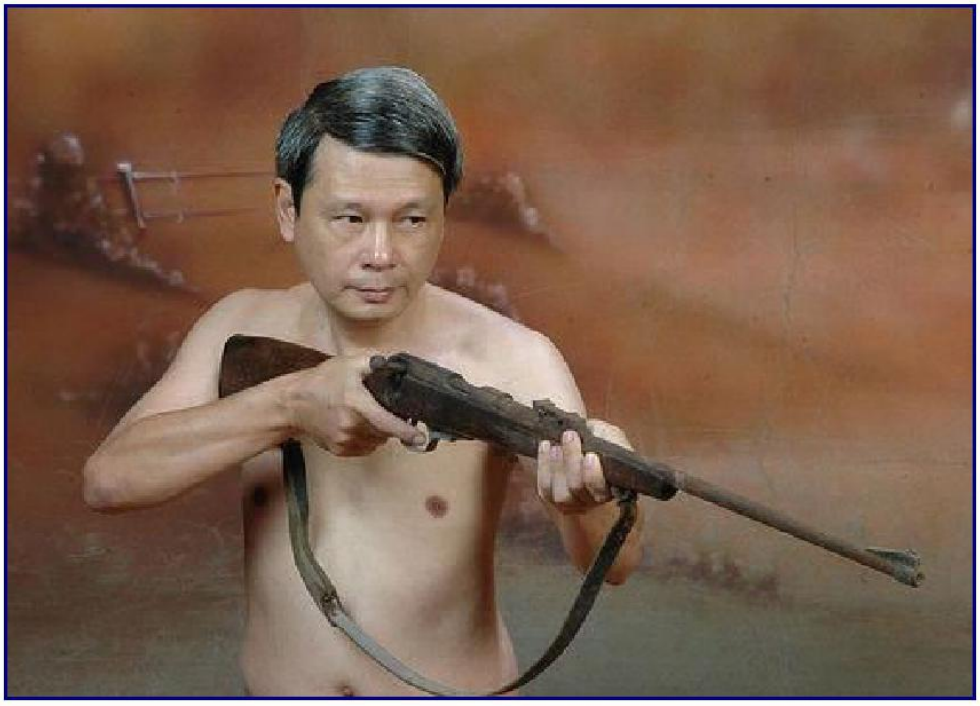

This is Filipino Judge Florentino Floro Jr. During his career as judge he made several claims that he had supernatural abilities including; clairvoyance, ESP, teleportation, telekinesis, and healing powers. He wore blue robes instead of the traditional black robes, except on Fridays when he would wear an all black outfit to recharge his psychic powers. He also claimed to be in communication with three duwendes (gnome people) named Luis, Armand and Angel, who he often consulted to help decide cases. He was removed from the bench by the Philippine Supreme Court in 2006 due to mental illness.

Currently he is making a bid for Chief Justice of the Philippine Supreme Court. Above he is pictured posing with the .22 rifle his father used to hunt small game with.

Update: Florentino Floro lost his bid for the Filipino Supreme Court but has bestowed himself with the title, "Chief Justice of the Universe".

Jure Grando - The First Written Vampire

Posted by **gatekeeper32** , 18 October 2014 · 125 views

The vampire is a mystical being who survives by feeding upon human blood. This creature is an ancient legend told within many parts of the world as folklore. There has even been historical cases documented where deaths and events occurring within rural town throughout Europe were believed to be the works of a vampire. Today, those accounts are considered as the results of disease, serial killers, superstitions or just hysteria. In concluding my series on vampire lore, we will be looking into the chronicled story of Jure Grando.

Jure Grando was the first real person to be historical written as a vampire. The account was recorded in an encyclopedia set named *The Glory of the Duchy of Carniola,* published in 1689, written by the scientist Johann Weilhard von Valvasor. In the story, Jure Grando was a peasant who lived within a small village from Istria, which is modern day Croatia. The legend says Jure had died in 1656, but returned back as a vampire.

In continuing with his story, 16 years after his death, Jure would rise from his grave to terrorize the village. He was witnessed roaming the streets at night knocking on doors throughout the town. Whoever's door Jure knocked upon, within several days someone died within the household. Even his widow would not be spared, as she reported her dead husband appearing in the bedroom to sexually assault her.

One night, the local priest, Father Giorgio was mentioned to confront Jure and drove him away by holding out a cross. In the legend, villagers had cornered the vampire, attempted to pierce his heart with a hawthorn stick, but failed as it bounced off his chest and the creature managed to escape. Father Giordio eventually led a group of villages to graveyard to end the vampire's reign of terror. Jure's coffin was dug up and when they opened it, the corpse was found to be perfectly preserved smiling. Another attempt to drive a hawthorn stick through the heart failed, however a villager used a saw to decapitate the vampire. The account of Jure Grando ends with peace returning to the village.

Jure Grando maybe the first historical account written involving a vampire, although many question and doubt the truth to these events. Suggestions were made Jure had faked his own death, the widow created the story to cover a love affair, a ring of thieves made use of the vampire legend or a tale created for Johann Weikhard von Valvasor to record. There are others within history once believed to be vampires, yet those are articles for another time, until then hope you enjoyed this series.

Other Sources of Information

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James Curley, former Mayor of Boston.

In the Fall of 1924 the Prince of Wales visited Massachusetts. Foregoing official visits, he spent his time hunting at the home of a friend, Bayard Tuckerman Jr. Maintaining a low profile was understandable, given the tensions at that time between England and Ireland. Massachusetts was the home of many Irish immigrants and was, as the *New York Times* put it, "given to a greater love for Erin than Britain." Government officials in Massachusetts seemed inclined to ignore the presence of the Prince.

However, while the Prince was hunting, his equerry, the Hon. Captain Lascelles, was approached by a man who identified himself as Lafayette Mulligan, "the social secretary to the Mayor of Boston, James M. Curley." Mulligan presented Lascelles with a golden key to the City of Boston, which he said was a gift from the Mayor to the Prince. Mulligan also delivered the Prince a formal invitation to visit Boston and be the guest of Mayor Curley.

The Prince of Wales later sent Mayor Curley a letter, warmly thanking him for the gift of the key, which he happily accepted, but regretfully declining the invitation to visit the city as the Mayor's guest, citing his inability to change his plans on such short notice.

The letter from the Prince shocked Mayor Curley — not because the Prince turned down the invitation, but because, to his knowledge, he had sent the Prince neither a key nor an invitation. Curley issued an angry public denial, stating he had no idea who Lafayette Mulligan was, but insisting the man was NOT his social secretary. (His real social secretary was Standish Willcox.)

The joke was that Curley was the son of Irish immigrants, and his core constituency was Boston's Irish working class. He was the last person who would have attempted to curry favor with the Prince of Wales. It was for this reason that the joke annoyed Curley so intensely.

The New York Times, Dec. 18 1924

Popular Reaction

PRINCE GOT KEY TO BOSTON.

But Mayor Curley Denies Golden Gift to Britain's Heir.

Special to The New York Times.

BOSTON, Mass., Dec. 17.—A gold key to the City of Boston and an invitation to visit Mayor James M. Curley, either at his home or at City Hall, were received by the Prince of Wales during his recent stay on the north shore, it was revealed today.

The communication was signed by "Lafayette Mulligan, Social Secretary to His Honor, Mayor James M. Curley."

The Mayor today denied that he had sent one of the gold keys to the Prince. He denied also having extended him an invitation to be the city's guest. Mayor Curley has no secretary by the name of Mulliban and his social secretary is Standish Willcox.

To make matters worse, the Mayor has received two letters of thanks for his kind invitations. One is from Bayard Tuckerman Jr., who was host to the Prince and his party at Hamilton. The other is from the Prince's secretary, Captain J. F. Lascelles, expressing the gratitude of his Royal Highness for the good wishes of the people of Boston as conveyed by their Mayor.

The New York Times described the Lafayette Mulligan stunt as "one of the most calmly and insolently audacious hoaxes that ever roused a staid city [Boston] to joyousness."

Curley's political opponents immediately hailed Mulligan as a hero. Councilman Daniel Lane proposed that Boston's Lafayette Mall be renamed Lafayette Mulligan Mall. Or, failing that, perhaps Lafayette Mull. The motion was denied.

Diners at formal dinners attended by the Mayor were heard to shout for Lafayette Mulligan.

An actual key to the City of Boston image via State Library of Massachusetts blog

Mulligan, for his part, continued his escapades. After the Mayor denied giving the Prince a key, Mulligan sent a key to Mr. Tuckerman, citing Tuckerman's "gracious silence following the Mayor's repudiation of his original generous impulse." Mulligan signed the letter, "former Social Secretary to his Honor, Mayor James M. Curley."

This prompted Mayor Curley to declare his intention not to give away any more keys to the city, on account of the competition from Lafayette Mulligan. He said he would wait until Mulligan died. Though in actuality Curley continued to give away keys to the city. There are records of him, in 1925, presenting keys to Chinese General Consul Ziangling Chang and to the Belgian ambassador.

The Search for Lafayette Mulligan

Mayor Curley demanded an investigation to find out the identity of Lafayette Mulligan. However, the search yielded no clues. At one point, Curley even employed the Burns Detective Agency to track him down. Britain's Scotland Yard also became involved, since they regarded it as a matter of national security to find out who had tricked the Prince.

The *Boston Herald* received a letter from Mulligan, with a return address of "Forty-two Beacon Street." This was the address of the Somerset Club, one of Boston's most exclusive clubs, of which Bayard Tuckerman was a member. Therefore, suspicion centered on the club. However, the members, including Tuckerman, denied any knowledge of the identity of Lafayette Mulligan.

Mayor Curley later announced his belief that Frank Buxton, a Pulitzer Prize winning reporter for *The Boston Herald*, was really Lafayette Mulligan. Buxton vociferously denied the charge.

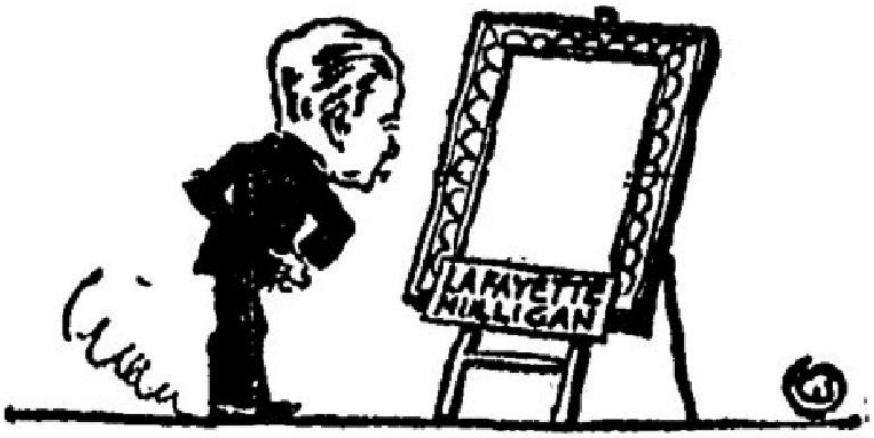

Illustration depicting the mystery of Lafayette Mulligan's identity from The New York Times, Dec. 15 1929

The Mayor received a number of satirical letters from Mulligan. The correspondence was written on fine quality paper with Mulligan's name embossed in pale green. However, they contained no return address, and the post office was unable to track down their sender.

The identity of Lafayette Mulligan was never determined.

Curley went on to serve as Governor of Massachusetts from 1935 to 1937.

An Outbreak of Mulliganism in England

Soon after the Lafayette Mulligan incident had made headlines in America, the residents of Boston, England all received an invitation to the home of the Mayor and Mayoress of that town. The invitations stated that the reception was in honor of "the social secretary of the Mayor of Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.A."

Photographers and reporters were sent notices inviting them to appear. Caterers and merchants were also ordered to bring goods.

However, neither the invitations nor the delivery orders were genuine. It took weeks to sort out the resulting confusion.

A New Lafayette Mulligan

In 1927 a curious deception was exposed that reminded many of the Lafayette Mulligan stunt of three years previous.

William Ryan, a fifty-year-old Boston city lamplighter, was discovered to have been sending out letters to world leaders inviting them to attend Boston's three-hundredth anniversary celebrations. He had been sending out four invitations a day for an entire year. He seemed to believe he could single-handedly organize a "League of World Cities," and envisioned himself as an "apostle of world peace." On his letters, he used the slogan "City Hall, the Gateway to World Peace."

Ryan's activities were only found out when Boston City Hall began receiving acceptances from officials in cities such as Moscow, London, and Berlin. Government officials scrambled to uninvite everyone whom Ryan had contacted.

Newspapers described Ryan as a new Lafayette Mulligan.

- "Hoaxer mystifies Bostons of New and Old England." (March 1, 1925). The New York Times.
- "No more keys to Boston: Mayor Curley will wait until Lafayette Mulligan dies." (Dec. 21, 1924). The New York Times.
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- "Invites noted men to city and creates stir." (Oct 3, 1927). The Danville Bee.
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a mountain near Gauley Bridge, W. Va., left. They are, from left to right: Clarence Skaggs, engineer;

Boston Recalls New Monarch's Part In Affair of "Lafayette Mulligan"

BOSTON, Jan. 21.—(AP)—Great Britain's new monarch—then the Prince of Wales, paid his last visit to Massachusetts in 1924 and unwittingly became involved in a hoax.

The visiting prince was a guest of John Lawrence, wealthy sportsman, at his Pride's Crossing home on the North Shore.

Leaders in New England society attended various functions there but the prince did not visit Boston, where James M. Curley, now governor of Massachusetts, was mayor.

Back in Buckingham Palace several weeks later, the prince discovered he had been presented a gold key to the city of Boston, together with a cordial invitation to visit the city. Appended to the invitation, written on official stationery of the mayor's office, was the bold signature, "Lafayette Mulligan."

The key and invitation had been mailed to Wales at the Lawrence home.

The prince hastened to acknowledge receipt of the key and of his tardiness in answering the invitation.

To Mayor Curley however, the prince's regrets constituted his first knowledge of the matter.

He promptly opened a search for "Lafayette Mulligan."

Suspecion fell on many. Political opponents were singled out. the mayor even put private detectives on the job but elusive "Lafayette Mulligan" remained just that.

London newspapers, which published the first story of the key and the invitation, followed up with tales of the hoax.

Irate, Curley promptly terminated the old practice of presenting gold keys to visiting dignitaries. A book about Boston succeeded the keys.

Nor has Lafayette Mulligan ever been unmasked.

Lake Michigan full of zombies after haunted house barge partially sinks

wgntv.com

Halloween has passed, but the zombies are continuing to surface at Navy Pier.

On Halloween night a floating haunted house sank after the high winds and waves came through.

Crews continue to work to get the barge out of the water and in the process, they are recovering zombies.

The owner of the Zombie Containment has watched the repair efforts pull the battered masterpiece out piece by piece.

“It’s an unbelievable amount of effort from painters to costume makers,” said owner John LaFlamboy. “So to watch it sink was very heartbreaking for a lot of us.”

Wednesday divers were in the water to help pull out 10 large containers that made up the haunted house.

LaFlamboy says it cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. He also says there are about 50 zombies and only a handful have been recovered. This could lead to some interesting work for the Coast Guard next Spring.

Video Courtesy WBEZ & Pictures Courtesy Tiela Halpin

Le mystère des «plaques de Tjipetir» ravive le fantôme du «Titanic»

lefigaro.fr

Ces plaques, fabriquées il y a 90 ans en Indonésie, s'échouent par centaines sur nos côtes.

Ces plaques, fabriquées il y a 90 ans en Indonésie, s'échouent par centaines sur nos côtes.

Des centaines de plaques de gomme, arrivées sur le littoral atlantique ces dernières années, pourraient s'échapper des cales englouties du «Titanic».

Fin janvier, Benjamin se promène avec sa famille sur la plage de Mimizan, à la recherche de bois flotté. Mais les tempêtes des dernières semaines ont déposé sur le sable un curieux objet: une plaque de gomme grisâtre, d'environ 30 cm sur 50, gravée dans toute sa longueur d'une étrange inscription: «Tjipetir». Très vite, le jeune garçon apprend qu'il n'est pas le premier à faire ce genre de découverte, comme le raconte *Sud-Ouest* . Depuis près de deux ans, des centaines de plaques de ce type ont été retrouvées sur le littoral atlantique, depuis le nord de l'Espagne jusqu'au Royaume-Uni, sans que l'on sache précisément d'où elles viennent. En France, les premiers recensements datent de septembre 2013.

Dès les premières investigations, le mystère s'épaissit un peu plus. «Tjipetir» fait référence au nom d'un petit village de l'ouest de l'île de Java, qui, au début du XXe siècle, s'est spécialisé dans la fabrication de plaques de gutta-percha, un latex d'origine naturelle, servant alors à la fabrication de nombreux objets du quotidien, depuis les malles de voyage jusqu'aux balles de golf. Mais avec l'émergence des matériaux de synthèse, l'engouement pour la gutta-percha a peu à peu baissé et l'usine de Tjipetir a fermé en 1920. Quatre-vingt-dix ans plus tard, ses plaques arrivent pourtant sur nos plages.

Le dernier secret du «Titanic»?

La solution la plus crédible voudrait que ces plaques proviennent de la cargaison de quelque navire ayant fait naufrage au début du XXe siècle. Or, parmi les hypothèses, un nom se détache, celui du *Titanic*. Les plaques auraient donc sombré avec le géant au large de Terre-Neuve, la nuit du 14 au 15 avril 1912, avant d'être libérées un siècle plus tard du fait de la désagrégation de l'épave.

Les différents sites où ont été retrouvées les fameuses plaques selon la page «Tjipetir Mystery».

Cette théorie est d'autant plus séduisante qu'elle est scientifiquement cohérente. François

Les différents sites où ont été retrouvées les fameuses plaques selon la page «Tjipetir Mystery».

Galgani, chercheur à l'Ifremer, souligne: «Je ne dis pas que ces plaques viennent du *Titanic*, mais rien ne permet d'infirmer cette hypothèse.» Les courants marins, le Gulf Stream et la dérive nord-atlantique ont très bien pu porter ces objets jusqu'à nos côtes. Autre indice, le très large spectre de dispersion des plaques atteste d'une provenance lointaine, bien au-delà du littoral. Enfin, la particularité de ce type de latex, qui se dégrade très rapidement à la lumière, indique qu'il est resté jusqu'à présent «dans un milieu protégé, comme les cales d'un navire».

Néanmoins, une porte-parole de la Cité de la mer de Cherbourg, qui consacre une exposition permanente au *Titanic,* estime que cette explication reste «improbable». «Nous avons vérifié la cargaison, il y avait bien trois caisses de plaques à bord du bateau, sans que l'on sache leur nombre exact ou qu'elles soient référencées par un numéro de série. Mais, ajoute-t-elle, on en trouvait dans les cales de tous les paquebots à l'époque.» Paul-Henri Nargeolet explore l'épave du Titanic depuis 1987. Mais surtout, il fait partie de la seule équipe à être, grâce à un robot, rentrée dans les cales du navire. Sa dernière exploration date de 2010: «On a bien vu des objets, assez difficiles à identifier, qui ressemblent à des plaques de gomme, mais ça pourrait aussi bien être des empilements de sac de toile. On m'a aussi demandé, ajoute-t-il amusé, si je n'avais pas vu la Renault du film [de Cameron, NDLR], qui a vraiment existé. Mais elle a sûrement été baladée pendant le naufrage, et comme il s'agissait de tôle fine, il ne doit plus rien en rester aujourd'hui.» Si l'épave s'émiette, elle ne lui semble pas encore assez détériorée pour «libérer» ses trésors.

Les plaques doivent donc provenir d'un autre bateau. *Le Télégramme* cite le cas du *Moerdyck,* un cargo néerlandais ayant fait naufrage dans la Manche en 1904, mais, dans ce cas, la position du navire n'aurait pas permis que les plaques se dispersent sur d'aussi grandes distances. En attendant, le Web s'amuse de chaque nouvelle découverte. Sur Facebook, une page a même été créée, «Tjipetir Mystery», invitant les internautes à recenser leur trouvaille. Et le champ des recherches ne cesse de s'élargir, puisque, samedi, une dernière plaque a été retrouvée sur le littoral suédois.

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Le mystère des «plaques de Tjipetir» ravive le fantôme du «Titanic»

Des centaines de plaques de gomme, arrivées sur le littoral atlantique ces dernières années, pourraient s'échapper des cales englouties du «Titanic».

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'Legitimate rape' – a medieval medical concept | Vanessa Heggie

Vanessa Heggie
Monday 20 August 2012 theguardian.com

Todd Akin, the Republican candidate for senate in Missouri, said in an interview released this weekend that he did not support abortion for rape victims because:

> "If it's a legitimate rape, the female body has ways to try to shut that whole thing down."

The idea that rape victims cannot get pregnant has long roots. The legal position that pregnancy disproved a claim of rape appears to have been instituted in the UK sometime in the 13th century. One of the earliest British legal texts, *Fleta*, has a clause in the first book of the second volume stating that:

> "If, however, the woman should have conceived at the time alleged in the appeal, it abates, for without a woman's consent she could not conceive."

This was a long-lived legal argument. Samuel Farr's *Elements of Medical Jurisprudence* contained the same idea as late as 1814:

> "For without an excitation of lust, or the enjoyment of pleasure in the venereal act, no conception can probably take place. So that if an absolute rape were to be perpetrated, it is not likely she would become pregnant."

This "absolute rape" is not quite the same as Akin's "legitimate rape". Akin seems to be suggesting that the body suppresses conception or causes a miscarriage, while the earlier idea of Farr relates specifically to the importance of orgasm. Through the medieval and early modern period it was widely thought, by lay people as well as doctors, that women could only conceive if they had an orgasm.

The biological basis for this idea is what the historian Thomas Laqueur has termed the "one sex system". The one sex system suggests that women's reproductive organs are fundamentally based on men's reproductive organs, so the vagina is represented as an inverted penis, the ovaries are testes and so on. Women had "cooler" constitutions, and therefore lacked the heat or force to drive the gonads out of the body, to convert ovaries to testes.

Thinking of the sexual organs as mirrors of each other obviously led to questions about the existence of a female "seed" or ejaculate. There was a disagreement about the roles of male and female seed – did they mingle to create the offspring, or did they contribute different things? Whatever the female seed contributed to conception, it was thought necessary, and so in theory a female orgasm was as important as a male orgasm.

Not everyone agreed with this interpretation. Helkiah Crooke, in his 17th century anatomy book *Microcosmographia* suggested that women's sexual organs were not simply inverted

versions of men's, and said that a woman's orgasm was not always needed, although conception was much more likely, and a pregnancy much more secure, if she had one.

Generally, though, the idea that a women had to orgasm in order to conceive (although not necessarily at exactly the same time as her male partner) was widespread in popular thought and medical literature in the medieval and early modern period. By logical extension, then, if a woman became pregnant, she must have experienced orgasm, and therefore could not have been the victim of an "absolute rape".

Medical theories of sex, reproduction and conception changed gradually through the 18th century, so that by the 19th century the female orgasm was considered much less important for conception, and the female "seed" – if it even existed – was of less significance to the foetus. In popular culture the idea of the essential female orgasm lingered, and seems to still exist in a mutated form today.

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Mona Lisa is Portrait of Leonardo da Vinci's Chinese Slave Mother, Author Claims

ibtimes.co.uk

Leonardo da Vinci's mother was a Chinese slave and the Mona Lisa is a portrait of her, a Hong-Kong-based historian has said.

In his forthcoming book, *Leonardo Da Vinci: a Chinese Scholar Lost in Renaissance Italy*, Angelo Paratico claims the relationship between da Vinci's father and his mother was frowned upon, which is why there are few records of her.

Paratico told the *South China Morning Post* that he is "sure up to a point that Leonardo's mother was from the Orient, but to make her an oriental Chinese, we need to use a deductive method".

He has spent years piecing together documents to make his case. Da Vinci's father is believed to have been a notary, but all that is known about her mother is that she was called Caterina.

She was moved to Vinci, about 20 miles from Florence, in 1452 to give birth. After this, there are no records of her.

Some people believe she was a local peasant, but Paratico says she was moved because having a relationship with a slave was seen as improper at the time.

"One wealthy client of Leonardo's father had a slave called Caterina. After 1452, Leonardo's date of birth, she disappeared from the documents. She was no longer working there."

Paratico believes Caterina was from China and that the Mona Lisa is a portrait of her: "During the Renaissance, countries like Italy and Spain were full of oriental slaves," he said.

"Mona Lisa is probably a portrait of his mother, as Sigmund Freud said in 1910. On the back of Mona Lisa, there is a Chinese landscape and even her face looks Chinese."

He also points to a number of other reasons da Vinci could have been Chinese: "For instance, the fact he was writing with his left hand from left to right… and he was also a vegetarian, which was not common [among Europeans]."

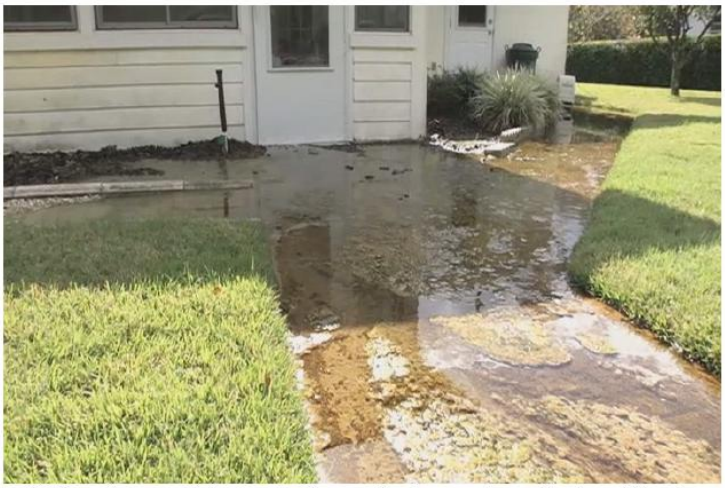
However, Paratico accepts the only way of solving this mystery would be by analysing DNA of relatives of the Renaissance icon who are buried in Florence.

The theory that da Vinci's mother could have been a slave from the Middle East was first put forward in 2002. Five years later, other researchers said his fingerprints suggested he was an Arab.

Art historian Vitor Teixeira said the idea da Vinci's mother was Chinese is "far-fetched", pointing out he has no facial features indicating Chinese descent.

Longwood residents want sewage removed from neighborhood

LONGWOOD – mynews13.com



Dirty water overtakes a walkway at a home along Azalea Drive in Longwood, Wednesday, Dec. 3, 2014.

Dirty water overtakes a walkway at a home along Azalea Drive in Longwood, Wednesday, Dec. 3, 2014.

By Jeff Allen, Seminole County Reporter
Last Updated: Tuesday, December 09, 2014, 7:17 PM

Ila Marsh says the soggy, dirty mess in and around her home has gotten so bad, she might have to temporarily move out and stay with relatives.

"It's shocking. I'm going to leave tomorrow morning, maybe the next morning – but I don't know if I can last that long," said Marsh.

Homeowners along Azalea Drive near Lake Brantley Drive said they've been dealing with what appears to be sewage running on to their properties.

After News 13 first looked into the problem Dec. 3, officials with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection said they've been meeting with the owners and operators of the nearby Wekiva Hunt Club Wastewater Treatment Facility.

The DEP said the facility's filters failed recently, which forced operators to release more water into their ponds. They said the failure, in conjunction with rain, rose the water table in the area.

A spokesperson for Sanlando Utilities told News 13 last week that any runoff was treated water and any sewage showing up anywhere would have to be coming from people's septic tanks.

However, residents told News 13 they believe their septic tank problems are direct result of the water runoff from the plant.

State health officials said they're hoping the plant's operators will clean up the mess and are waiting on the results of an investigation by DEP. They are advising residents to clean up what they can using bleach.

Residents we spoke with said it's too big of a job for them to clean up completely.

Marsh said she believes whatever is in the dirty water around her home is making her sick.

She said she has not been feeling well the last few days.

“There’s no doubt about that. It’s just finally gotten ahold of me,” said Marsh.

That’s why the 86-year-old said she’s leaving the home she’s lived in for decades, at least for a while.

State environmental officials said operators of the wastewater treatment plant are lowering the water levels of the plant’s ponds.

A plant spokesperson told News 13 Tuesday this will help alleviate the ground pressure issues in the septic fields of the homes near the plant. The plant spokesperson also said plant operators are in constant communication with DEP, which is closely monitoring all actions by the plant.

A state health official told News 13 he hopes to meet face-to-face with plant operators as early as Wednesday to talk about what can be done to clean up the neighborhood near the plant.

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Lucky schoolboy finds seven leaf clover

A nine-year-old boy is hoping for some luck, after finding a rare seven leaf clover.

Alastair Barnes should be in for a lucky year - after finding a seven leaf clover. Alastair Barnes should be in for a lucky year - after finding a seven leaf clover. Photo: Solent Photo: Solent

Alastair Barnes discovered the unusual clover at Coombe Bissett nature reserve, near Salisbury, Wilts while out walking his dog with his father Jonathan.

Clovers occasionally have leaves with four leaflets, instead of the usual three - these are considered lucky, while five and six leaf clovers are considered even more unusual.

Alastair has placed the clover in a book to protect it from damage and in the hope it will bring him some good luck.

"I was really hoping to find a four leaf clover when I spotted one with seven leaves," he said.

"I was amazed and I immediately shouted to my dad, 'daddy daddy, I've found a seven leaf cover.'

"He didn't believe me at first but then he came over and had a look for himself.

"I picked it and took it home. It was amazing to find something so rare - I was so happy."

Sue Tatman, from the Wildlife Trust said: "This is an extremely unusual find.

"It just goes to show it is always worth keeping your eyes peeled when you are outside, as nature is full of surprises."

According to tradition, four-leaf clovers bring good luck to their finders, especially if found accidentally.

Each leaflet is said to represent something - the first is for hope, the second faith, the third love, and the fourth luck.

Another Irish legend tells that the three leaf clover, or "Shamrock", was what Saint Patrick used to represent the Holy Trinity.

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In early Egyptian mythology, Mafdet (also spelled Maftet) is depicted as a woman with the head of a cheetah. Her name means (she who) runs swiftly. She is present in the Egyptian pantheon as early as the First Dynasty.

Mafdet was the deification of legal justice, or rather, of execution. Thus she was also associated with the protection of the king's chambers and other sacred places, and with protection against venomous animals, which were seen as transgressors against Ma'at.

Since venomous animals such as scorpions and snakes are killed by felines, Mafdet was seen as a feline goddess, although it is uncertain whether alternately, she also was meant to be a cat, a mongoose, or a leopard. In reflection of the manner in which these animals kill snakes and she was given titles such as, slayer of serpents.

In art, Mafdet was shown as a feline, a woman with a feline head, or a feline with the head of a woman, sometimes with braided hair which ended in the tails of scorpions. At times she was shown with a headdress of snakes.

She also was depicted as a feline running up the side of an executioner's staff. It was said that Mafdet ripped out the hearts of wrong-doers, delivering them to the pharaoh's feet, in a similar manner as domestic cats who present people with rodents or birds that they have killed or maimed.

During the New Kingdom, Mafdet was seen as ruling over the judgment hall in Duat where the enemies of the pharaoh were decapitated with Mafdet's claw.

Her cult was eventually replaced by that of Bast, another cat-goddess, a lioness warrior who was seen as the pharaoh's protector, but her cheetah imagery continued in association with the pharaohs including personal items and the bed upon which their mummies were placed.

Mafdet as the bed upon which a mummy of

a pharaoh is being attended to by Anubis

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Magician Gets Out Of Ticket After Magic Trick

The Huffington Post | By Simon McCormack huffingtonpost.com

Posted: 12/09/2014 6:59 pm EST Updated: 12/09/2014 6:59 pm EST

He made the legal consequences disappear.

Magician Steven Brundage said he was driving to his home in upstate New York from a gig in New York City at 3 a.m. on Saturday morning when he was pulled over by Scotia police.

Officers said he was doing 42 miles per hour in a 30-mph zone. Then, Brundage said, an officer noticing a bunch of playing cards in his car. asked the trickster for a little sleight of hand.

Brundage told the New York Daily News that he was "99.9 percent sure" he wouldn't get a ticket after he showed them his Rubik's cube trick.

In it, he tosses a scrambled cube in the air, but when it lands, the toy is arranged by color again. "How did you do that?" on officer asks.

Scotia police Chief Peter Frisoni told the News it probably wasn't the magic trick that got Brundage off the hook.

Frisoni said, at that time of night, his officers are more concerned with reckless or drunk driving, not speeding. Department officials did not immediately respond to HuffPost's queries.

The moral of the story is cars are dangerous death boxes and magicians are under appreciated entertainers.

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Man blows himself up after family feud in Germany

BERLIN–

foxnews.com

Published November 16, 2014
Associated Press

Nov. 16, 2014: A police woman passes a destroyed police car near Homberg Germany. (AP/dpa,Boris Roessler)

Police say a man angered by a family feud has set off explosives outside his house in Germany, killing himself and wounding seven people in a small village.

Police spokesman Thomas Rodemer said that following an argument inside his home in Homberg village in Hesse state, the 49-year-old man drove away in his car, then returned and blew himself up inside the vehicle parked outside the house.

The seven people slightly wounded by debris from the explosion included family members, neighbors and two police officers who had been called to settle the family argument. The blast also damaged neighboring homes.

Rodemer said the bomber had a license to use explosives and that police are investigating the case.

The man's name was not released in keeping with Germany's privacy law.

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Man claims to be Devil, jams thumbs in man's eyes in Port St. Lucie, police say

tcpalm.com

12:00 AM, Jul 6, 2009

PORT ST. LUCIE — A man who claimed to be the Devil and threatened to kill another man before jamming his thumbs in the man's eyes faces an aggravated battery charge, according to an arrest affidavit released Monday.

The victim told investigators he was leaving a Cumberland Farms store on Floresta Drive about 12 a.m. Monday when John Eugene Yale Jr., 43, approached him.

They started talking and after a few minutes, Yale said, "I am the Devil and I am going to kill you!" according to the affidavit said.

Police gave this account: Yale then jumped on the victim and hit him in the head. He jammed his thumbs in the victim's eyes, which were bleeding.

The victim hit Yale and fled to his home. Police found Yale at Southeast Evergreen Terrace and Southeast Floresta Drive. The victim identified Yale as his attacker.

Yale, listed as unemployed, was arrested on a felony aggravated battery charge.

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Man Dismembered Dad, Used Boxed Body Parts As TV Stand

The Huffington Post | By Hilary Hanson huffingtonpost.com

Posted: 11/18/2014 1:09 pm EST Updated: 11/18/2014 1:59 pm EST

A U.K. man is accused of killing and dismembering his father, then using a box full of the man's body parts as a TV stand.

Nathan Robinson, 28, admitted in Winchester Crown Court to killing his father, The Guardian reported Wednesday. However, Robinson's lawyers argue that he is only guilty of manslaughter, not murder, because Robinson was experiencing "abnormality of mental function" when the killing occurred.

Prosecutors say Robinson fatally stabbed his father, 48-year-old William Spiller, in May 2013 at the apartment where they both lived in Dorset. He then dismembered the body and cut it into pieces before storing the remains of his 6'5", 350-pound father in plastic boxes, with Spiller's head in a filing cabinet, according to the BBC.

According to police, he was using the plastic boxes that held his father's body parts to prop up a television.

A few hours after the killing allegedly took place, a downstairs neighbor noticed a "pink liquid" dripping through his ceiling, but when he went to ask Robinson about it, he was told nothing was wrong. Prosecutors now believe the liquid was Spiller's blood, which had become diluted while Robinson was cleaning up.

Despite the neighbor's observations, no one discovered Spiller's remains until about a month later, after the man's girlfriend reported him missing and law enforcement searched the apartment.

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This Lobster Is Old Enough To Collect Social Security

The Huffington Post | By David Moye huffingtonpost.com

Posted: 12/04/2014 3:47 pm EST Updated: 12/04/2014 7:59 pm EST

A lobster found off the coast of Santa Barbara, California definitely belongs in the upper crust of crustaceans.

The giant lobster weighs nearly 12 pounds and is estimated to be a whopping 70 years old.

Biologist Forrest Galante, 26, caught the extra-large lobster while freediving near Anacapa Island on Oct. 6 and immediately realized he had something extraordinary.

“I’ve been doing this for ten years and I’ve never seen a lobster as big as Albert Girther -– which is his name," Galante told Barcroft TV. "I mean any lobster that can bear hug a man must be pretty huge and he had no problem with that."

California lobsters rarely get above 3 pounds due to overfishing, and Galante admits he was tempted to turn the creature into a giant lobster feast.

“I’ve got to say it was very tempting to take him home and eat him –- he had pounds and pounds of delicious meat but he was clearly a good breeder, so my family and I decided that we had to put him back into the water so he could have more children," Galante said, according to the Mirror.

Galante brought the ancient invertebrate to the Ty Warner Sea Center where he was able to rest and fatten up before he was taken to a protected marine reserve off the California coast, the New York Post reports.

"There was just no way I could kill it for a one-time meal," Galante told ABC7.

forrest galante

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Man Found Dead Inside a Hole in His Backyard

your4state.com

BERRYVILLE, Va. - A 61-year-old man was found dead inside a hole in his own backyard on Sunday afternoon off the 300-block of South Church Street in Berryville.

"In this particular case, there was an old, hand-dug well that had never been filled in," said Harold Rohde, chief of the John H. Enders Fire and Rescue Company.

The man has been identified as Kenneth Couch. Police say the well or cistern had a concrete slab over it, and it recently caved in. Officials aren't certain how Couch himself fell in, but they say it doesn't appear he was standing over it, or that the hole caved in on him. He was unresponsive when crews arrived.

The hole was described as six feet by six feet, and nearly 15 feet deep. Officials classified it as a technical rescue, and were on the scene for nearly nine hours.

"This is the first rescue of this sort where we had to get Fairfax County out here, that I know of, in the 19 years that I've been here," Rohde said.

The cause of death is still under investigation. Officials are calling it "an unfortunate accident."

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Man marries another tree

2014 November 29 09:47:13 zimkasi.com

Man marries another tree

Published: 2014 November 26 07:48:37 (989 Views)

A Peruvian man known for his environmentalism has married another tree at a national park in Bogota, Columbia on Sunday.

Richard Torres symbolically married the tree as a way to promote caring for trees in Columbia, and in an effort to encourage the rebels of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia to plant trees instead of inciting war, according to the Associated Press.

While Torres' nuptials seem to have been intended more as an awareness-raising campaign, it is not unheard of for people to commit to spending the rest of their lives with a non-human or object.

The 2008 documentary Married to the Eiffel Tower follow a number of people, mostly women, who claim to have long-term relationships with large objects.

Last year, Torres married a tree in Buenos Aries.

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Man Ruins Ferrari F430 By Trying To Make It An Enzo

By Viknesh Vijayenthiran 14 hours ago yahoo.com

Man Ruins Ferrari F430 By Trying To Make It An Enzo

It never ceases to amaze us what some individuals will do to their cars to turn them into something entirely different, but this latest conversion probably takes the cake. While usually the donor cars aren't worth much in the first place, the owner of this crude Enzo conversion started off with a perfectly good Ferrari F430—which has now been ruined.

The F430-come-Enzo is currently listed for sale on *eBay*, where it has a starting bid of—wait for it—$400,000. The F430 used for the conversion is a 2007 model, and it only has 4,000 miles on the clock.

No changes have been made to the engine, which remains a naturally-aspirated 4.3-liter V-8 rated at 490 horsepower. The transmission is the F430's available automated manual, and the seller says the new body is made of carbon fiber.

From the supplied photos, the quality of the work looks poor and the exposed hydraulic cylinders for the doors simply add to the overall bizarreness of the car. We'd say buyer beware, but one look at these photos should be enough to convince anyone that there are much better cars to be had for the money.

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Manchester storytellers share tales of Northshire vampires and ghosts

By Telly Halkias, Special to Berkshires Week & The Shires of Vermont Posted: 10/29/2014 12:18:41 PM EDT 0 Comments | Updated: 9 days ago

Posted: 10/29/2014 12:18:41 PM EDT 0 Comments | Updated: 9 days ago

berkshireeagle.com

Visitors to the Equinox Hotel in Manchester, above, have described ghostly activity.

MANCHESTER -- Today, the Northshire -- Manchester and its surrounding environs -- is known mostly as a tourist destination. But once ghosts and vampires were said to roam here, and some say mysterious goings-on occur to this day.

Joe Durwin, one of the region's folklorists and purveyors of the paranormal, studied anthropology in college and finds such stories fascinating. The Northshire has a history of these tales, he said, like the 1793 Rachel Burton vampire incident and the 1819 Russell Colvin murder.

In 1789, Captain Isaac Burton married Rachel Harris, who fell ill and died a year later of consumption, now better known as tuberculosis. Soon after, Burton married Hulda Powel, who quickly showed signs of deteriorating health.

In 1793, as Hulda grew sicker, Burton's family and close friends decided to take action to save his second wife, Durwin said. It became widely believed Rachel had been a vampire, whose spirit was sucking the life blood out of Hulda.

"There was a notion in several areas of New England -- Manchester apparently being one of them -- that if someone was deemed a vampire, then disinterring their remains and torching certain vital organs would help the cause of others who were ill," Durwin said. "Rachel's newfound status asa vampire wasn't good news for Hulda. So, if Rachel was dealt with appropriately, the thought was this would save Hulda."

According to eye-witness accounts, on a frigid February morning in 1793, an unruly crowd headed to Rachel's grave.

They dug it up, removed what remained of her heart, liver and lungs, and burned them on the blacksmith's forge.

"They believed the demon had been slain," Durwin said. "Unfortunately, it didn't save Hulda, who died soon after. These types of vampire spirit-slaying rituals continued in New England right up to 1891. Public backlash and outrage against them finally put a halt to it."

The next major supernatural intrigue involved the alleged 1819 murder of Russell Colvin, which spurred a debate between the presence of a ghost and an imposter.

Colvin, who was married to the expecting Sally Boorn, vanished without a trace. Sally's brothers, Jesse and Stephen Boorn, were suspected of foul play. In 1825, the ghost of Colvin reportedly appeared to Sally's Uncle Amos, claiming the two brothers killed him. This led Amos to dig up some of Russell's artifacts in the Boorn cellar -- led there by Colvin's ghost.

"After many legal shenanigans, the two brothers were tried and convicted of Russell Colvin's murder, and Stephen was sentenced to hang," Durwin said. "At the 11th hour, Russell miraculously shows up and exonerates the brothers of his killing. But then, almost immediately, he vanishes again."

For years afterward, Durwin said, a debate raged as to whether Russell's ghost reappeared to right a wrong or supporters of the Boorn brothers had conspired to employ and train a doppelganger to stand in as Russell and cast doubt on the legal process.

The case has never been solved, but has famously become known by the title of a book on the subject, "The Counterfeit Man." It's also studied in the nation's law schools, a ghoulish legacy from post-Colonial Northshire.

"These kinds of stories from Manchester set the stage for credulity in the paranormal to carry over into the present day, specifically in the haunting of the Equinox," Durwin said.

The Equinox Hotel and its related properties, a sprawling resort anchoring Manchester Village, has been in operation since 1769. It has also been home to numerous reports of ghosts and mysterious occurrences.

Joseph A. Citro, a Vermont researcher of the supernatural, has written many books on the subject, including the recent "Vermont Haunts" and "Joe Citro's Vermont Odditorium." He said he was uncertain when Vermont's grandest hotel picked up its eerie reputation, but he first heard about the ghosts in 1996 from a former Equinox employee.

Over the years, he said, housekeepers have been afraid to enter certain rooms because of unaccountable noises, rapid changes in air temperature or things that vanish and appear elsewhere.

"[A] source told me housekeepers and security staff have witnessed peculiar goings on in a certain room on the second-floor north," he said. "Ice chests, chairs and things that just suddenly appeared in the room were discovered piled up like a pyramid, stacked one on top of another. The people I talked to found the event impossible to interpret."

According to Citro, one employee recalled a hotel guest who worked for Guinness Corporation. He went into his room, put his keys on the table, then stepped out for a moment. When he came back his keys had been separated from the chain and thrown all over the room.

Many of the staff he interviewed reported odd multi-sensual phenomena on the third floor and

south wing, he said. Still others spoke of self-moving furniture.

There has long been speculation on the identity of the vaporized visitors, according to Citro. Possibilities range from Mary Todd Lincoln, wife of Abraham Lincoln, to William Marsh -- who owned the original tavern on the site which the Equinox was later built -- and George Orvis, son of then-Equinox owner Franklin Orvis. George vanished in 1918 when heading out to the property's pond to fish or swim, never to return.

On considering the Equinox reports, Durwin spoke as an anthropologist, but left just enough room for conjecture appropriate to Halloween.

"As humans, we develop stories over generations, and then gravitate to them to help explain the world around us," he said. "That's called folklore. But the unexplained sometimes remains that way. When we can't account for it completely, well, that's just very interesting."

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Berry Collegeis surrounded by both factual and fictional history. These fictional histories of Berry College stem mostly from legends, myths, and rumors of ghosts and hauntings that run rampant throughout the campus. Students are notorious for passing these stories on from one generation to the next and most at Berry have heard of at least one of the many ghastly stories. The consensus is that most of Berry's alleged ghosts are predominantly friendly and do not antagonize students.

The Ghost of Mary Hall

Ghost of mary hall.jpg

High in the central tower between the girl's dormitory of East and West Mary in the Ford Complex there is an empty room subject to many activities that exceed the norm. According to the rumors, just after World War II, a female resident hung herself in one of the closets of the tower following her boyfriend's death in the war. To this very day, her troubled spirit forever roams the halls of the tower. Students often report hearing her soft, mellowing cries in the distance, and feeling a sudden inhalation of cold, dense air as her ghost passes right through you on her never ending quest through the abyss of the after-life.

Today the room remains unoccupied but unlocked, a quiet place to study for those not deterred by the ghost stories. However, the closets and tower's bathroom remain mysteriously locked with dead-bolts, reinforcing many 'abstract' suspicions among the students. Though there is no record of a suicide in the tower, believers claim that this was indeed a true event that was purposely not recorded, for fear of scaring the girls who would live in the residence hall in the future. Skeptics, on the other hand, claim that the opposite is true; the girl's death was a myth invented by previous students to scare later generations.

The Legend of Swafford

The story of Swafford is the strange tale of a mysterious mountain man who lived near the House O' Dreams. When interviewed for a newspaper article in 1993, Dan Biggers, the Director of Oak Hill and the Martha Berry Museum, said that back when the Berry Boy's School was in operation on Mountain Campus, the older boys would tell the freshmen stories about the horrible things Swafford did ("Ghost Stories Alive at Berry"). These boys even told their younger classmates that a few boys had gone missing. Eventually, they would convince the new freshmen to take a walk in the woods to try to find Swafford and to prove that they

were not afraid. According to legend, these boys always became lost and were never seen again. There is, however, no official record of any missing young boys at the school, but could this be another Berry cover-up? Another worker at Oak Hill and former Berry student in the 1940's, Lillian Farmer, reported to the same journalist that, "There really was an old recluse named Swafford who lived up on the mountain." Farmer explained that the high school boys were never allowed to go up on the mountain except when the headmaster took them camping as a reward for good behavior and studies. Swafford considered them trespassers and felt they were intruding. He would play tricks on them at night to try to scare them off the mountain ("Ghost Stories Alive at Berry").
Since then, stories about Swafford's ghost haunting the mountain have circulated on Mountain Campus. Some say that Swafford's ghost still terrorizes those who stray onto his territory. Many students at the elementary school on Mountain Campus are still wary about venturing out on their own in fear of never returning.

The Green Lady and Stretch Road

The story of the Green Lady is one of the most diverse and most told stories at Berry College. There has been more than one death associated with Stretch Road and no one is sure who the Green Lady actually is.The most accurate, yet most untold speculation is that the Green Lady is the ghost of Becky Stanton. A group of WinShape students who attended the school in the 1980's had heard the stories of the Green Lady and decided to take matters into their own hands, using a Ouija Board to contact the ghost. The Ouija Board informed them that the ghost's name was Becky Stanton. The students asked the board the year and cause of death, it replied "1921" and "Red Death." One of the students from this group didn't believe in the power of the Ouija Board so the following day she went to the Rome/Floyd Records Center. Her discoveries were shocking. She discovered that in 1923 a girl by the name of Becky Stanton, age 13, was killed in a house fire. While the Board and the actual evidence vary slightly, it was determined that a young girl growing up in the rural south may not have known the proper year ("Main Campus Haunted History Tour").

Another speculation is that the Green Lady is the ghost of Lindsey Elizabeth Will, who was a student at Berry until her death in 1988. Lindsey Will died in bicycle accident on Stretch Road after having a fight with her boyfriend. Having ridden their bicycles on Stretch Road until night had fallen, she and her boyfriend parted ways in the dark as he rode ahead of her to calm himself down. When he turned around to ride back to his girlfriend, they could not see each other in the darkness. They collided, and Lindsey Will died when she suffered a head injury. The most commonly told story about the Green Lady is derived from this. The legend says that a young couple went down Stretch Road one night to be alone. Shortly after the couple had a disagreement and the boyfriend left her behind. He started to regret his action, so he turned the car around to go back and get her. He hit something, but assumed it was a deer. When he got out of his car, he discovered he had hit and killed his girlfriend, but this story has no factual evidence to support it. However, another event that did take place on Stretch Road was a suicide by one student in 1985. This student poisoned herself with carbon monoxide by locking herself in her car and inhaling the fumes ("Main Campus Haunted History Tour").

The first documented sighting of the Green Lady was recorded in 1985, which was before the death of Lindsey Will and the suicide by poisoning. While it would make more logical sense to believe that the Green Lady is the ghost of Becky Stanton, most people do not know the factual events that took place on Stretch Road. A fourth, less familiar story rooted in fact is that the Green Lady is the ghost of yet another girl who lost her life on Stretch Road during a flood in 1964 ("Main Campus Haunted History Tour"). While the most told story is the fictional tale involving the boyfriend running over his girlfriend, it is just as likely that the Green Lady is the ghost of Becky Stanton or the young girl who drowned in the flood. It is rumored that the Green Lady prefers to haunt the area surrounding the bridge on Stretch Road, possibly the place where the young girl drowned.

Another story associated with Stretch Road claims that if one drives up the road, stops near the speed bump just before Mountain Campus, and turns his lights off, a mysterious green mist will surround his car. Many others have reported seeing this strange green mist while camping at the campground off Stretch Road. Other stories are even more far-fetched and say that if you stop your car on Stretch Road and honk your horn three times, a small green girl will appear in the car beside you. While many of these stories may seem comical, there remains something mysterious about the three-mile road that connects Berry's campuses.

CCC Road

CCC Road, also known as Seven Bridges Road, is a dirt road on the North side of Berry's campus that runs parallel to Mount Springs Cemetery and Mountain Springs Church. The road runs from east to west and contains seven bridges. CCC Road (which stands for the Civilian Conservation Corporation camp that used to be located on the land) is not the most popular attraction at Berry College, but it draws the attention of anyone interested in the paranormal because it is surrounded by an abundance of stories of supernatural phenomena. As one legend would have it, if one travels the road from east to west and counts the bridges, he will count seven on the way in; but when he turns around and travels from west to east, he will count only six. Some say that if seven people walk the road and one person stands at each bridge, by the time the seventh person reaches the seventh bridge, one of the seven people will have vanished into thin air and only six will remain. This is one of several very creative and imaginative stories about CCC Road, but while it may seem a little absurd, one should not be too quick to dismiss the possibility that the road is haunted. On February 28, 1993, the body of Mark Allen Gregg, a sophomore from Jacksonville State University, was found on CCC Road where he apparently committed suicide. According to police reports, Gregg, who was originally from Kingston, GA, died from a single gunshot to the head ("Apparent Suicide Found on Campus"). Perhaps it is the spirit of this young man that haunts the road.

Other ghost stories about the road stem from the cemetery and the mysterious church that are nestled deep in the woods off CCC Road.

photo3.JPG

Mount Springs Church

Mountain Springs Church

Mountain Springs Church, located off CCC Road at the foot of a large hill that contains Mountain Springs Cemetery, is riddled with rumors of being the meeting place for a satanic cult. The historic church building is situated in a small clearing in the woods a few miles behind Frost Chapel. The stories about devil worship and cult meetings at the church most likely stem from an incident in the twentieth century in which the church was vandalized with satanic and occult symbols. To this day there hangs an aged sign on the front of a small white building opposite the church that says, "There's a $500 Reward for Information Leading to the Arrest of Church Vandals." According to the Oak Hill Museum, the son of the church's pastor of a century or so ago went to the church late one night for solo devil worship. While there is no evidence that the pastor's son had any followers in his late night activities, rumors of a cult presence at the church still run rampant because so little is known about the church and its services. Mountain Springs Church is actually a Methodist church whose congregation meets once a month, but because of its secluded location and lack of advertisement, the church remains mysterious to many and thus invites rumors about its shady activities.

Many stories have also been told about strange music and bells that can be heard coming from the church at night. The stories say that when one goes to investigate the source of the music he will find the church empty while the bells continue to ring. Another, more outlandish story that haunts the church's reputation is the legend that a pack of ghost dogs prowls the nearby cemetery at midnight. It is said that if one goes to the cemetery at midnight, he can hear the growls and snarls of them. Still, another story says that the area surrounding Mountain Springs Church is haunted by the ghosts of the young men who used to work at the Civilian Conservation Corp. Camp which used to be located were the church now stands.The young men are said to have died under the harsh conditions of the labor camp, and that their angry spirits now haunt the grounds. While there is no historic evidence to support most of these stories, Mountain Springs Church still remains the center of many chilling tales.

The Hoge Building

On September 9, 2012, a documentary came out which discussed haunted locations around Rome, Georgia. In this documentary, The Hoge Building at Berry College is investigated. The Hoge Building is supposedly haunted by the roaming spirit of, none other than Martha Berry herself. The story is that a woman was working in the Hoge Building while her daughter was playing in the hallway outside her office. It was not long before the mother started to hear her daughter speaking to someone. At first the woman didn't think anything of it, but as her daughter continued to speak as though she was having a conversation with someone, the woman became curious. Finally, she went out in the hallway to see who her daughter was talking to, only to find her daughter sitting alone in the hallway. When the mother asked who she was talking to the daughter answered, "The lady with the cold hands." The little girl said that the person she was talking to had touched her face after they were done talking. Years later, the same little girl saw a picture of Martha Berry and identified her as the lady with the cold hands. There have also been reports of lights being turned on in the third floor, despite the third floor not having electricity.

Whether the stories be true or false, whether they consist of suicide, murder, or cold hands, theres more to Berry College that meets the un-dead eye.

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May 26, 2012

Mary Worth and the Origin of Bloody Mary

Many people in the US have played "Bloody Mary", a popular children's game and a test of a courage in slumber parties around the country. The game involves locking yourself into a dark bathroom with nothing but a candle, standing in front of the mirror and calling out "Bloody Mary" three times. In another version, one must whisper "I believe in Mary Worth." This ritual serves to summon the vengeful witch, Mary Worth, who will then rip out the summoner's eyes or claw their face.

It is uncertain where the legend originates from, but one possibility is a witch named Mary Worth who, according to local tradition, lived on the Old Wagon Road in Chicago during the Civil War. It is said that she used to kidnap runaway slaves and keep them chained in her barn, doing who knows what to them in her dark rituals.

The locals eventually became furious enough to take the law into their own hands and burn Worth at the stake. The legend says her body was buried in St. Patrick's Cemetery. Doubtful, since an infamous witch would have never been laid to rest in a Christian cemetery. Instead, she may have been buried on her farm, as one couple learned the hard way.

Many decades after Mary Worth's execution, a farmer and his wife bought her former property and, fully aware of the place's history, built their home on the very foundations of the barn in which Worth practiced her black arts. Apparently not one to be scared by old legends, the farmer set out to clear the land for an oat field.

During his work, he came across a square stone and moved it to the door of the house, figuring it to be a good stepping stone. This proved to be a mistake. Violent and often dangerous events immediately began to plague the couple, with the wife finding herself locked in the barn or the house on multiple occasions and plates crashing on the floor by themselves.

As the activity worsened, the farmer began to wonder if he had inadvertently disturbed Mary Worth's real gravesite. He tried to return the stone to its original place in an attempt to end the disturbing phenomena, but he never could find the exact spot. After several years of torment, the house burned to the ground in 1986, supposedly due to arson.

There were later several failed attempts to build on the property. A developer managed to eventually raise a group of houses, but the one nearest to Mary Worth's barn has since burned down once or even twice.

1. GabrielJune 3, 2012 at 6:33 PM

i used to play this, too. nothing ever happened obviously, but it was scary fun. its nice to find out Bloody Mary's possible origins.

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The Doll Family

Midgetville has become a generic term for small villages which contain miniature houses presumably constructed for "little people." These tiny communities can be found in several states including Virginia, Pennsylvania, and New Jersey, but the most mysterious of all of the Midgetvilles is rumored to be found in Southern California. A longstanding legend in the Long Beach and Riverside areas states that Midgetville was constructed during the heyday of midget performers in the 1930's following the filming of The Wizard of Oz. Although the tiny village which also goes by the name, "Munchkinland," cannot be located by professional or amateur researchers, it is undeniable that the legend is based in fact.

There are many versions of Southern California's Midgetville and it appears that there are many possible locations and origins. One version of the legend of Midgetville states that the actors who were used on the set of The Wizard of Oz (none of whom were listed in the movie's credits) used their money to build a tiny village. They built their community in a small, isolated area, the Virginia Country Club in the Bixby Knolls community of Long Beach, California. Short stop signs, small doors on regular sized houses, strange "Stay Out" and "Turn Around" signs in front of gated communities, and an abundance of he-said-she-said stories have led investigators into the La Linda community of Long Beach. La Linda was once the palatial estate of a wealthy Long Beach banker, George Hathaway Bixby. Upon his death in 1922, the land was sold to a developer who subdivided the estate. It is from this development that the Midgetville stories began to circulate, but the small community of little people has remained elusive.

Another version that slightly parallels the Long Beach adaptation of Midgetville reports that the same group of actors from The Wizard of Oz and the performers of Klinkharts Troupe of Midgets Circus, who were stranded in Riverside when the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus disbanded in 1938, constructed their small village on the slop of Mount Soledad in Riverside, California. Extensive searches of the area have failed to reveal the true and documentable location of the illusive settlement.

The most peculiar of all of the theories surrounding Midgetville states that it was or is located on Hillside Drive, in La Jolla, near Riverside and was built by "The Doll Family" in 1935. The Doll Family was a group of four midget siblings who were brought to the U.S. from Germany in the 1920's by businessman Bert Earles. The children began performing in Southern California sideshows under the name of Dolls, but all available research lists them as having adopted the Earles name. Daisy, Gracie, Harry, and Tiny Earles were picked up by Ringling Brothers & Barnum and Bailey Circus. During these years, the Dolls became very popular and were highly sought after by movie producers. The first film featuring a Doll was the silent film, The Unholy Three, starring Lon Chaney, in which Harry Doll played Tweedledee. The Dolls individually and as a quartet appeared in many films during the 1930's, including The Wizard of Oz. Their success gained them prominence and wealth.

Klinkharts Midget Equestrian Troupe

In 1935, furniture maker turned Rancho architect, Cliff May, constructed four houses on Hillside Drive in La Jolla. The houses had extraordinarily small front doors, very low windows, tiny fireplaces, and miniature outbuildings. It has been proposed that these four houses were built for the Doll Family, citing the small features of the houses. The houses' blueprints can be found in the book, MGM: When Lions Roar, and L. Frank Baum, writer of The Wonderful Wizard of Oz, lived in La Jolla in the 1920's and 30's. Although only one of these houses exists today, searchers cannot seem to agree at which Riverside Drive address the last possible Doll house is located.

The southern California Midgetville has been dubbed, by many, as an urban legend, however, curious Californians still search for the illusive tiny village of little people and believe that someday it will be located. StrangeHistory.org researchers are of the belief that Midgetville was a real place at one time and that the "legend" of the community has survived the test of time. We urge Californians to continue searching for Midgetville. Good Luck! ……Igor's Alley??? We don't know what to think!

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Milford's clock tower survives lightning strike

- Officials say it's a blessing Town Hall's historic cupola didn't catch fire when lightning struck and damaged its bell tower Friday, a day after a similar strike destroyed a Medway church steeple.

- **By Danielle Ameden/Daily News staff**

MetroWest Daily News, Framingham, MA
By Danielle Ameden/Daily News staff
Posted Jul. 7, 2009 @ 12:01 am
Updated Jul 7, 2009 at 7:02 AM

- Officials say it's a blessing Town Hall's historic cupola didn't catch fire when lightning struck and damaged its bell tower Friday, a day after a similar strike destroyed a Medway church steeple.

The bolt tore a section of white clapboard on Town Hall's tower and caused pieces to fly across the roof and 80 feet to the ground.

Maintenance supervisor Charlie Skaff said the strike also fried the building's fire alarm panel.

Skaff was getting bids for repairs yesterday, as others marveled over the close call.

"This could have been a disaster," said Building Commissioner Anthony DeLuca. "We were extremely lucky."

At the top of cupola, which overlooks the town, Skaff pointed to the damage to the painted cedar clapboards and intricately carved trim of the tower, which houses a big bronze Holbrook bell.

"This corner board actually exploded," he said, suspecting the lightning came from the south and blasted the wood toward the east.

It struck between the building's golden dome and the clock room, an area above Upper Town Hall, which is accessible by ladder.

"It was a good hit," Skaff said. "We were lucky it didn't catch on fire like Medway. All this historical stuff would have been gone. Irreplaceable."

The Medway Community Church's wooden steeple was ravaged by fire during a thunderstorm Thursday morning, and its sanctuary sustained water damage.

Milford Town Hall, a stately circa 1850s building, is on the National Register

of Historic Places. Over the years, the Town Hall and its clock tower have had their share of issues, from roof leaks and roosting pigeons in the cupola to a fire in August 2004.

At that time, a spark from a smoldering iron ignited wood as repairs were being made to the exterior of the clock tower.

The antique clock, made by Howard & Davis, was damaged during roof repairs in 1994 and repaired in 2006 by a specialist the town hired. In the mid-'90s, the town shot down a $500,000 offer from a Japanese firm that wanted to buy the clock.

Skaff said he winds the clock twice a week. The attached bell rings every hour.

Multiple alarms went off late Friday afternoon when the lightning struck while the building was closed for the three-day holiday weekend, Skaff said.

Many officials said they didn't even realize what happened, even though it struck just hours before town's Fourth of July celebration and fireworks.

"Unbelievable," said Assessor/Administrator Priscilla Hogan, looking up at the damage. Hogan said last week's summer storms wreaked real havoc in Berlin, where she lives. Lightning struck her home and a neighbor's house, with a bolt blasting straight through that home, going through a bay window.

Until the bids are in, Skaff said he couldn't say how much the tower's repair might run. The damage is minor, but replicating the architectural detail could be costly. He said there may need to be scaffolding put up for the work.

Page 2 of 2 - Selectmen Chairman Brian Murray said Milford can probably tap its reserves to fix both the bell tower's damage and the Town Hall's fire alarm panel.

"We'll see how bad it is and then look for the funding source," Murray said. "The Finance Committee has a reserve fund which is used for these kind of emergencies."

(Danielle Ameden can be reached at 508-634-7521 or dameden@cnc.com.)

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Mismanagement allegations at Pearl Harbor memorial

By Audrey Mcavoy, Associated Press
PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii –

freep.com

The USS Arizona is one of the nation's most hallowed sites, an underwater grave for more than 1,000 sailors and Marines killed when Japan bombed Pearl Harbor and sank their ship in 1941.

Now, it's the scene of alleged rampant mismanagement.

An internal report from the National Park Service, which operates a visitors center for a memorial at the battleship, said tour companies sold tickets with the knowledge of park officials even though tickets are supposed to be free.

Another pointed to substandard maintenance, including scuffed museum walls that languished unrepaired and bird droppings that weren't cleaned.

The revelations in documents released last month come just before crowds gather at Pearl Harbor today for an annual ceremony remembering more than 2,500 killed 73 years ago on all the ships and on the ground.

"To watch the desecration of a very sacred, very important place was very disheartening," said John Landrysmith, a former park service guide and 41-year-old Iraq war veteran.

He quit his job earlier this year after feeling his supervisor was punishing him for questioning the ticket policy and believing the park service failed to act on his complaints. He intends to file a whistle-blower retaliation lawsuit against the park service.

Park superintendent Paul DePrey said the park service was trying to accommodate the tour companies, which bring busloads of people each day.

"It was not intended for a huge glut of tickets that were going to just the tour companies," he said "We tried to work that system the best we could. It was not successful."

The practice stopped when they realized it didn't comply with park service policy and wasn't working as intended, he said.

A new ticketing system starting next month, DePrey said, will do a better job laying out the terms and conditions of the permits commercial tour companies operate under. The park service also will start scanning tickets to get data on how they are being used.

The problems outlined in the reports are centered at the visitor's center, which anyone visiting the Arizona and the memorial must pass through. The $56-million complex, rebuilt four years ago, explains events leading up to and during the attack with the help of museum exhibits and movie screenings.

Visitors then board boats to the white, open-air memorial that sits atop the Arizona's rusting

hull.

There are only 4,350 boat tickets available each day. That amounts to fewer than 1.6 million tickets a year, even though the park service says 1.8 million people visit Pearl Harbor annually.

A September 2013 park service report said there was "at minimum" no transparency in the way tickets were distributed.

The report, which was obtained under the Freedom of Information Act by the nonprofit group Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, outlined how park service employees gave walk-in tickets intended for independent visitors to commercial tour companies who then sold them.

Tickets also were given to Pacific Historic Parks, a nonprofit that runs a gift shop and raises money for the memorial. The organization gave some to people spending $7 to rent an audio tour from the nonprofit, and gave others to companies that would lead clients to the audio tours, the report said.

There were rarely enough tickets for independent visitors while this was going on, the report said.

DePrey said visitors pay the companies for the transportation they provide to Pearl Harbor from Waikiki hotels and other places, not for the tickets.

Yet the report said uniformed commercial tour drivers were observed standing about 15 feet in front of the park service information desk — in full view of the park ranger — offering tickets to visitors who were already at Pearl Harbor.

Another anecdote said two visitors reported being sold tickets for $39 each by a tour company even though they drove their own rental car to the visitor's center.

A separate internal report listed a slew of maintenance issues.

Visitors to the museum today will see silver duct tape securing a black ribbon with the words "Exhibit Temporarily Unavailable" to an empty glass case that once held a model of the Arizona. The exhibit has been down for a year.

Outside, an orange plastic fence surrounds a muddy spot where a water catchment basin isn't working as intended. The fence has been up since last December, the park service said.

The park service is trying to keep the facility in good condition, DePrey said.

"I'm not happy when I see aspects of the facility that are in poor condition. It's not something that I or my maintenance or the park rangers are proud of," DePrey said. "But we are realistic that these things will happen from time to time."

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Missouri city misplaces 1959 time capsule

upi.com

| June 21, 2009 at 3:24 PM

OVERLAND, Mo., June 21 (UPI) -- Residents of Overland, Mo., say they can't find a time capsule buried in 1959 that was to be used for a local celebration.

Shirley Needy, the Overland Historical Society vice president, said the search was hindered by a lack of a plaque or stone to identify where the capsule was buried five decades ago, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported Sunday.

"I guess things were different in '59," Needy said.

An attempt to garner clues about the capsule's location through a notice in the Localite Shopper community newspaper proved equally fruitless, Needy added.

The capsule was to have been opened Saturday as part of the city's 70th anniversary celebration, but even a photograph of the burial ceremony failed to pinpoint its hiding spot.

"I've looked at this picture till I'm blue in the face," Chuck Boone, retired assistant public works director, told the Post-Dispatch.

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Monkey spotted again, this time near U.S. 301 and Sligh

By Keith Morelli | Tribune Staff Published: | Updated: December 2, 2014 at 07:11 AM

TAMPA — tbo.com

The descriptions match, though there's no way to say for sure if it's the same elusive monkey.

Late Monday morning, a motorist on U.S. 301 said, he saw a monkey scurry across U.S. 301 near Sligh Avenue, directly east of two independent sightings near the Lowry Park Zoo last week.

"It definitely was a monkey, I almost hit it," said Nelson Vidal, an insurance adjuster who spotted the creature. "It was crossing over, heading east across 301. I almost hit it. I said, 'What the hell?' I just called 911, told them there is a monkey on the loose for sure."

Tampa police said officers received two calls on Thanksgiving from different people in two locations near the zoo, saying they saw a monkey heading east. The zoo has said all its monkey are accounted for.

The distance between the Thursday sightings and the one Monday is more than five miles. The monkey would have had to cross the Sligh Avenue bridge over the Hillsborough River just west of Florida Avenue and skirt a bend in the river near 40th Street to reach Sligh Avenue and U.S. 301.

Vidal said there's no doubt the animal he saw was a monkey.

"It was one of the ones with a really long tail," he said. "I'll tell you, to see one of those things while you're driving down the highway really gets your blood pressure going.

"I started thinking maybe I should turn around and take a picture," he said, "but that thing was hauling ... on all fours. At first I thought it was a cheetah. It was that color, with a long tail. Then, I said, 'Wait a minute, that's a freakin' monkey.' "

Hillsborough County sheriff's spokeswoman Cristal Bermudez Nunez confirmed 911 dispatchers received a 911 call about the latest monkey sighting, and that the matter was turned over to the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

People who spot the monkey should keep clear of it and call the wildlife hotline at (888) 404-3922, commission spokesman Gary Morse said.

"Under no circumstances should they try to approach it or capture it or feed it," he said.

He said no one has reported missing a monkey.

Based on descriptions, he couldn't speculate on what kind of monkey was on the loose.

"Certainly," he said, "with the number of reports we've received, people are seeing something."

Hundreds of spiders are living a lie

stuff.co.nz

Last updated 09:43, November 20 2014

Apparently no one has told spiders that they're terrifying, because at least 300 species of the arachnids have evolved to mimic ants instead, according to a recent article at The Conversation.

Ant mimicry, or myrmecomorphy, is actually a very smart tactic for some spiders - especially if they want to eat ants, or have to avoid being eaten themselves. Over time, these species have developed bodies that mimic an ant's three segments. Sometimes they even wave their front legs around to mimic antennae.

Defensive mimicry is the most common kind. Spiders that look like ants are less likely to be attacked by larger spiders, because ants are generally pretty aggressive prey - and don't taste very good to their eight-legged attackers, anyway. In 2013, a PLOS ONE study found that a species of jumping spider that mimics ant appearance was less likely to be preyed upon by wasps than species that didn't mimic ants.

Predators that mimic their prey are less common, but the adaptation is delightfully devious: Because ants are aggressive and social, spiders want to do everything they can to catch them on their own. If not, they might succeed in killing their prey only to be attacked by the rest of its colony. From The Conversation:

Aggressive crab spiders typically jump on a lone unsuspecting ant and bite it. Then, in order to avoid encounters with other ants, the spider and its victim fall away on a safety line made of the spider's silk while the venom takes effect. Others, like the ant-mimicking ground spider, use the body of their dead prey as a shield, holding it up between themselves and any other challenging ants. This tricks attacking ants into believing that the spider is just another ant, carrying a dead nest-mate away from their nest.

Mimicry isn't exclusive to ant poseurs, of course. Lots of insects have evolved to mimic plants as a form of camouflage, and sometimes plants even evolve to mimic insects. When it comes to avoiding predators and reproducing, just being yourself isn't always an option.

19 Comments

zemilith

Ok ok I concede I didn't realise that they were not actually insects. I thought arachnids were a sub species or form of insect. Well it's always good to learn something anyway, there is no shortage of experts out there it would seem! But it's a shame most of these threads turn into arguments or people wanting to prove eachother wrong, instead of actually writing about the coolness of the subject matter. If you look at the comments below where is the discussion on the mimicry or the detail in the way the spiders do this? It's just a few jokes and random thoughts. Disappointing to say the least

KiwiInOz

I agree it's pretty cool. Feeding on a particular species of ant is quite a specialist niche, and

I'd imagine that the majority of the 300 hundred species of spider alluded to above are Batesian mimics rather than aggressive mimics.
zemilith
Indeed. Thanks for your impartial non judgemental comments, it good to know some people can still inform somebody that they are incorrect without assuming they are dumb or unintelligent. Yes although defensive mimicry is common it is quite peculiar that they single out this one species of ant. Perhaps the spiders are clever enough to realise that the certain natural enemies, especially wasps are far more cautious of these ants. The threat of a colony overwhelming them is apparent so they must ensure they do all they can to avoid that danger. One aspect of mimicry in nature I am also intrigued by is mentioned in the final paragraph of the article, plants evolving to mimic insects. This would suggest some kind of sentience but plants are not, as far as I'm aware. They are living organisms but it makes you wonder if they actually are "smart". Even the cunning Venus Flytrap is just reacting to a trigger from its prey landing on the delicate sensory stem, yet nature has evolved it to do so specifically for flys. I love those plants. Not that they are mimicking, just saying I am fond of them. Better make that clear incase the INSECT nerds decide to fail me for it lol
Kiwica
Sorry Zemilith... Spiders are NOT insects, nor are Scorpions. Scorpions are animals in the order Scorpiones, under the class Arachnida, so they are related to spiders. You kinda argued against yourself there.
Brent Kerehona
Seriously, a spider is NOT an insect! Stop writing this rubbish, there's students out there that will believe you. An insect is not an arachnid and vice versa, despite both being Arthropods (animals with exoskeletons).
MissHJL
Well the white tail spider hiding in my jacket pocket for two days whilst I popped my hand in and out of my pockets certainly wasn't pretending to be an ant..
Mike_Oxlong
Stupid birds, everyone knows spiders have 8 legs, not 6!

Birds are spending too long on their ipads these days, and the mother birds must not be bothering to teach them the 3 R's.

Next thing they will forget how to fly
ashbee18
Okay so now I hate spiders and can't trust ants! Great!

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Morgue worker admits having sex with 100 corpses including murder victims

mirror.co.uk

- Aug 17, 2014 08:57
- By Richard Hartley-Parkinson

Kenneth Douglas, 60, was high on drink and drugs when he carried out the sickening attacks between 1976 and 1992

A morgue worker admitted having sex with up to 100 corpses over a period of 16 years.

Kenneth Douglas, 60, admitted to abusing the bodies of Karen Range, Charlene Appling, and April Hicks while drunk or on drugs in 1991 and 1992.

But he also admitted that he had sex with dead women as far back as 1976 while working the night shift.

He told the court: "I would just get on top of them and pull my pants down."

The extent of his crimes came to light when as Hamilton County, Ohio, faces huge legal bills after his victims' families were told they could sue.

He added: "If I hadn't had anything to drink when I went to work, it wouldn't happen. I would do crack and go in and drink and go in."

His wife complained to him that he 'reeked of sex' when she picked him up from work, according to WPTV , and she tried to report him.

However his supervisor, who was aware that he had been drinking while working and having sex at work, told her to stop calling.

His victims included 23-year-old Charlene Appling who he had sex with on the day she died after being strangled while six months pregnant.

Karen Range, 19, was almost decapitated when she was murdered by a door-to-door salesman in 1992.

And April Hicks, 24, died in 1991 after falling three storeys.

Douglas was only caught when DNA from his semen was found inside Range's body. Her killer denied rape but admitted murder.

Families of the victims said that Hamilton County ignored warning signs and Douglas's wife added: "Whatever happens on county time and on county property is county business."

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Mosquito-catching contest announced

31 October 2014 bbc.com

Last updated at 11:31 ET

A tiger mosquito

Residents of Kaohsiung could win cash for squashing this tiger mosquito and his friends

People in a southern Taiwanese city have been offered prizes for catching mosquitoes.

The contest, announced by the Kaohsiung city health department, is aimed at tackling an outbreak of the mosquito-borne dengue fever in the region. Residents are being asked to catch as many mosquitoes as they can, dead or alive. Whoever captures - or squashes - the greatest number will be rewarded with NT$3,000 (US$100; £62), the health department says. Runners-up will be given free insect repellent and mosquito nets.

People will have to either trap the insects securely or hold on to their remains, because they'll need to be presented to officials for counting. "Instead of fining people who fail to remove standing water and other breeding sites around their homes, we think this program could raise greater community participation," Ho Hui-ping of the city's health department tells the Focus Taiwan website.

More than 7,000 cases of dengue fever have been confirmed in Kaohsiung, with 200 new cases being reported every day, The China Post reports. There have also been dozens of cases of the potentially lethal dengue haemorrhagic fever, a severe form of the infection. The virus is described as a "major international public health concern" by the World Health Organisation, which says in recent years its transmission has increased in urban areas.

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Mysterious 'Ghost' Ship Rediscovered Near Hawaii

yahoo.com

Mysterious 'Ghost' Ship Rediscovered Near Hawaii

View gallery

A "ghost ship" that has been lost beneath the waves for more than 60 years has been discovered nearly a half-mile below the ocean surface off the Hawaiian island of Oahu.

A small submersible vehicle came upon the shipwreck last year, researchers at the University of Hawaii announced today (Dec. 5). Despite being torpedoed after World War II, many parts of the ship, including the ship's wheel, are still in their original locations.

"The upper deck structures from the bow to the stern were well-preserved and showed no sign of torpedo damage," Terry Kerby, a submersible pilot with the university's Hawai'i Undersea Research Laboratory, said in a statement. [Shipwrecks Gallery: Secrets of the Deep]

Vast submarine network

The ship, then called the Dickenson, first set sail in early 1923 as part of a fleet of ships that maintained the growing submarine telecommunications network at the time. The ship set out from Chester, Pennsylvania, as part of the Commercial Pacific Cable Company fleet, and arrived in Hawaii in July of that year.

The Dickenson ferried supplies and patched up cables at the remote Midway and Fanning Islands from 1923 to 1941. Then, soon after the bombing of Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, the Dickenson evacuated British employees of the telecommunications company Cable and Wireless Ltd., from Midway Island, ferrying them back to Oahu. Some of the evacuees even spotted a submarine tailing their ship, before American ships chased it away.

View gallery
The U.S.S. Kailua when it was still in operation in 1943..

During the war, the Midway Island telecommunications hub stopped functioning, and the Dickenson was renamed the U.S.S. Kailua and was sent to maintain cables in other locales in the South Pacific.

After the war, the ship returned to Pearl Harbor, but neither the Navy nor its original owners

wanted it. On Feb. 7, 1946, the ship was torpedoed and sunk into the deep waters off Oahu, but no one recorded its final resting place.

"From her interisland service to her role in Pacific communications and then World War II, Dickenson today is like a museum exhibit resting in the darkness, reminding us of these specific elements of Pacific history," said Hans Van Tilburg, a researcher with the maritime heritage program in the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Office of Marine Sanctuaries.

Easy ID

The team came across the WWII ship by accident last year. The shipwreck was about 2,000 feet (609 meters) below the water's surface and was still sitting upright, with its lone mast still pointing upward and the wheel still intact.

"It is always a thrill when you are closing in on a large sonar target with the Pisces submersible, and you don't know what big piece of history is going to come looming out of the dark," Kerby said.

Almost everything on the ship was still in place, and the identification was easy — the navy ship number, IX-71, was still visible on the ship's bow.

Follow Tia Ghose on Twitter and Google+. Follow Live Science @livescience, Facebook & Google+. Originally published on Live Science.

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Mystery as 'explosions' and 'loud bangs' are heard across UK from London to Glasgow

mirror.co.uk

- Nov 29, 2014 23:29
- By David Raven

Some suggested it sounded like 'fireworks' - but others compared the loud noises to 'aircraft sonic booms'

WENN

Loud bangs: Dozens of people claim to have heard the bangs across the UK

Several loud 'mystery bangs' that shook windows baffled people across the country on Saturday night.

Dozens of Twitter uses from London to Glasgow claimed to have heard the strange noises, which sounded like fireworks or loud aircraft and occurred between 10pm and 10.30pm.

Some suggested it sounded like 'aircraft sonic booms' and pointed to Russian airships that were performing 'routine military exercises' while passing through the English Channel.

What are the mystery 'explosions'? 8 explanations for strange 'loud bangs' across UK

But the Ministry of Defence denied any knowledge of jets being scrambled and Met Police said the only possible explanation they were aware of was a firework display in Croydon.

However others were reporting to have heard bangs around the same time over 100 miles away.

Sonic boom: Several Twitter users claim the noise could have been made by aircraft

And several claimed on social media that their pets appeared to have been 'spooked' by the strange noises.

Twitter user Dave Reed claimed: "Dogs went crazy for a couple of minutes here in Fareham. Assumed audible distant bangs were fireworks."

PA

But a Met Police spokesperson said apart from the firework display, they were unaware of any ongoing incidents the bangs could be related to.

Britain has been on its second highest terrorism threat level of severe, meaning an attack is considered highly likely, since August.

At 3am on Saturday morning a loud explosion was reported to have been heard in the area near to Britain's largest army training base Catterick.

North News & Pictures

False alarm? Police were unable to find evidence of an explosion

Police carried out a lengthy investigation involving counter-terrorism experts, a helicopter and bomb detection dogs.

But despite closing the A1 motorway and a the search taking up the whole of the day, no official explanation was given and no evidence of any explosions were found.

Earlier this week another mysterious bang was heard over Manchester by several residents - fire crews spent an hour searching for the source of this but nothing was found.

Speaking about this morning's 'explosion' in Catterick, police superintendent Dave Hannan said: "We are satisfied that the call to the police was made in good faith.

North News & Pictures

Cordoned off: A 10 mile stretch of the A1 in North Yorkshire is closed in Catterick

"In view of the location of the suspected explosion, the source of the information, the current threat level to UK security and a report a few hours earlier of a vehicle seen in suspicious circumstances outside the barracks, we were not prepared to take any chances with people's safety."

On Monday, Home Secretary Theresa May said Britain was facing the biggest terrorism threat in its history.

Since August dozens of terrorism suspects, including some accused of plotting to kill police officers or soldiers, have been arrested.

Did you hear the loud bangs across the UK on Saturday night? Did you record what you heard? Tweet us @DailyMirror if you have any recordings or videos of the unexplained noises.

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Mystery of Clearwater Monster solved

■ It left tracks on beaches as far north as the Suwanee River.

St. Petersburg Times

CLEARWATER - Sixty years ago this summer, something scary happened on the beach. A monster emerged from the Gulf of Mexico and wandered around in the dark.

The Clearwater Monster didn't hurt anyone, but left lots of tracks, discovered the next morning on the sand.

The tracks looked like nothing anyone had ever seen. They weren't the kind of tracks left by dinosaurs, but they were large, about 14 inches long and 11 inches wide. They featured a narrow heel and three long toes. The tracks were more birdlike than reptilian, though not entirely birdlike. They were a dispatch from an unknown world.

The news made the papers. The news made the radio. The monster was the talk of Clearwater.

Clearwater was a sleepy place, something right off a postcard — the perfect stomping ground for the monster.

The Clearwater Monster was clever. The fiend left tracks, inflamed imaginations, then vanished. Just when people stopped thinking about him, he resurfaced.

This time he knocked over a lifeguard stand and left hair or feathers or something unearthly on wooden pilings. He went on a rampage. The Clearwater Monster walked the beach at Indian Rocks. He visited the waterfront of Sarasota. He rounded the Pinellas peninsula, headed north, bypassed the St. Petersburg waterfront and kept going until he found a place to leave tracks on the sand next to the Courtney Campbell Causeway.

In 1948, the creature showed up about 100 miles north of Pinellas County. A beachcomber found tracks near the Suwannee River.

It was left to Ivan Sanderson, a self-taught zoologist, author and WNBC radio commentator, to render an intelligent opinion. As the flash bulbs popped he studied the tracks, furrowed his brow, did some measuring. He was photogenic, a Douglas Fairbanks for the beach set, with slicked-back hair, a pencil-thin mustache and wardrobe that all but announced "Adventure!"

Clearwater was the perfect stomping ground for the monster.

"Definitely not a hoax," Sanderson announced. The tracks were so deep and wide, he opined, that only something heavy and tall could have made them. A giant penguin was his theory.

On a recent afternoon in Clearwater, Tony Signorini answered the door of his house. He recalled moving to Clearwater after World War II. His new boss was Al Williams, a practical joker.

"Back in, I want to say 1946, though it could have been '47, Al gets his hands on a National Geographic. There was a picture of dinosaur tracks. Al said, 'You know, we could have fun with this.' "

It's still in his garage.

"We made them in the shop," he said, looking at the weird boots. "We went to this blacksmith shop and poured lead in our molds. Each track weighed 30 pounds. We bolted black high-top gym shoes to each track.

"Al and I rowed out to the beach. I put on the shoes. I jumped out of the boat in shallow water. I was young then, about 25 or so, and much stronger than I am now, an old man. I had to kind of swing my legs out to the side and then forward to get going. Somehow I didn't break my legs. I left deep tracks about 6 feet apart. I made this big loop from the surf, up the beach, and then back into the water to the boat.

So Tony Signorini is the famous Clearwater Monster?

"Yes. We were surprised to read in the papers that people had seen the monster because nobody was on the beach that night."

N.J.'s 'Bermuda Triangle': Mystery surrounds Clinton fishing hole's deep, dark past

By Eugene Paik/The Star-Ledger on June 04, 2012 at 10:00 AM, updated June 05, 2012 at 4:44 PM

nj.com

View full size

CLINTON — A fisherman's paradise, Round Valley Reservoir in Hunterdon County stretches across 2,000 noise-free acres and is stocked with plenty of trout. On a good day, you can gaze down about 20 feet into its blue waters.

But there's also a dark side to the popular Clinton Township fishing hole, one of New Jersey's deepest man-made lakes. Somewhere in its depths lie six presumably drowned men who've been missing for years, and surrounding it are tales about its death toll, which numbers roughly a couple dozen within the past 40 years.

Some locals call the reservoir "the Bermuda Triangle of New Jersey," a nickname that's being uttered once again after a fishing hook snared a skeletal human foot earlier this month.

But don't tell that to the authorities or local fishermen, who say there's nothing supernatural at work here. To them, the only monsters are the wind gusts that can kick up within minutes and the water's cold temperatures, both of which have long caused trouble for those venturing out onto the lake.

"I doubt there's a secret bogeyman somewhere who's creating wind cycles to harm some poor sap of a boater," said Manny Luftglass, a fisherman who's written about the reservoir.

Round Valley Reservoir's otherworldly mystique took shape in recent decades as the deaths mounted. Not only did they occur soon after fishing was allowed there in 1972, but they didn't slow down, occurring as recently as March when the body of a hiker — an apparent suicide — was found.

The legend took hold because six of the bodies have never been recovered, and authorities believe they're somewhere in the reservoir's 180 feet of water.

View full size

The first victims to go missing were Thomas Trimblett, 27, of North Arlington, and Christopher Zajaczkowski, age unknown, of Jersey City. Both men were fishing in a 12-foot aluminum boat on May 4, 1973, when it capsized on the reservoir's east side.

Four years later, Craig Stier, 18, and Andrew Fasanella, 20, both of Trenton, were last seen traveling along the north shoreline. Their canoe washed ashore days after their reported disappearance.

On March 18, 1989, John Kubu, 37, of Rahway, vanished during a fishing trip with Albert Lawson of Linden. Lawson's body was found in 1993.

The last to go missing was Jeffrey Moore, 27, of Ringwood, who was last seen on a fishing trip on Oct. 22, 1993, with 26-year-old Raymond Barr. A passing boater was able to rescue Barr, who reportedly said Moore drowned after their boat took on water.

There have been multiple attempts to find the missing — authorities scoured the lake with a submarine in 2006 — but no human remains have been found. The Hunterdon County Prosecutor's Office, meanwhile, is awaiting lab results on the foot to determine whether it is a clue to where a body may be.

All of this has helped the myth of the reservoir reach new heights, but local fishermen believe there really is no mystery. The answer is quite simple, they say: With the proper preparation, the danger can be greatly minimized.

A common thread in many of the deaths is that the victims were in too small a boat, said Anthony "Randy" Guerrera, president of the Round Valley Trout Association. He said any vessel smaller than 14 feet is in danger of capsizing in the wind, which can reach speeds of up to 40 mph because of the valley's bowl shape.

Those winds don't necessarily start out strong, but they become trapped in the valley and spin around before they kick up waves several feet high, said Kenneth Lang, a trooper with the New Jersey State Police's Marine Services Bureau.

According to Luftglass, the wind can be at its worst between 10 and 11 a.m., and there are strobe lights along the shore that flash when the water gets too choppy.

View full size

Once a boater is thrown into the water, the cold temperatures, which can dip to about 50 degrees in the deepest parts, can become deadly.

"That cold water, when you get in, is a shock to the body," Lang said.

The shock could cause a person's body to spasm and inhale water, or the body could cramp easily because of the cold water. There's also the chance of hypothermia.

"Sometimes it can be a matter of 30 seconds before your body goes," said Lt. Stephen Jones, state police spokesman.

The cold water is what causes bodies to remain below the surface, authorities said. Bodies don't decompose as quickly, which means there's a lack of gases from decomposition to lift them to the surface.

What also makes the reservoir a tough swim is its tendency to play tricks on the eyes, said Rhonda Quinn, assistant professor of anthropology at Seton Hall University. Quinn, who visits the reservoir regularly, said its round shape makes it hard to gauge the distance to the shore, disguising how far someone has actually gone into the water.

"Even the best of swimmers would have trouble swimming the lake under those (windy) conditions," she said.

As for what exactly lies beneath, that's only added to the legend. For years, there were tales of buildings, trees and roads that remained standing after the reservoir was created — claims no one could confirm.

View full size

What's known is that homesteads were razed before the reservoir was built and that the site was once occupied by the native Lenape tribe, Quinn said. Hence, it wouldn't be a surprise if ancient remains eventually made it to the surface and complicated identification efforts.

There's also the possibility the

bodies might have become entangled in dead trees at the reservoir's bottom, making it hard to spot them on sonar, Luftglass said.

So why do people still flock there if the area is that dangerous? The cold waters may have made the reservoir infamous, but they're also what makes the reservoir one of the state's prime hotspots for trout.

In fact, Round Valley Reservoir is home to state records for the largest lake trout, brown trout, small-mouth bass and American eel, according to the Round Valley Trout Association.

Despite the dangers, the man-made lake offers a lot of beauty that can't be replicated, Luftglass said. Just be sure to bring a big enough boat, keep watch over the weather reports, wear a life jacket and stay within boundaries that you know are safe.

"Bermuda Triangle? I think not," Luftglass said. "This is a beautiful place. You see it, and it's like, 'Holy cow.'"

Note: Based on erroneous information provided by the state Department of Environmental Protection, the original version of this article described the Round Valley Reservoir as the deepest man-made lake in New Jersey. That distinction belongs to Merrill Creek in Warren County.

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On April 17, 1865, eight days after General Robert E. Lee surrendered to General Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Courthouse, Union Cavalry Colonel Oscar LaGrange approached the tiny eastern Georgia hamlet of LaGrange. Colonel LaGrange (coincidentally named) and his battle-hardened cavalrymen expected skirmishes with home guard forces in and around Lagrange; however, the small force of horsemen came face-to-face with a “curious, odd, and singular spectacle,” the Nancy Harts.

The Nancy Hart Militia, aka the Nancy Harts, consisted of forty women of LaGrange led by Nancy Hill Morgan and Mary Alfred Heard. They had been established as a militia unit organized to protect LaGrange early in 1861. With the help of Doctor A.C. Ware, the town physician, and a book titled “Rifle and Light Infantry Tactics” published in 1861 by William J. Hardee, the women learned drill and ceremony, battle tactics designed to protect LaGrange from Union invasion, and target practice. Within a few weeks of their inception the women had become superior markswomen, created a chain of command, and named themselves “The Nancy Harts,” in honor of Revolutionary War heroine, Nancy Hart.

Nancy Ann Morgan Hart was born in 1735 in the Yadkin River Valley of Western North Carolina. Shortly after her birth her family moved to the fertile Broad River Valley of Elbert County in north eastern Georgia. She was married at a young age to a Benjamin Hart from a prominent family. Among his descendants are Thomas Hart Benton, U.S. Senator from Missouri, and Kentucky Senator and orator, Henry Clay. Nancy’s family was also well connected to prominent figures in U.S. history. She was the first cousin of Revolutionary War General and later Representative from Virginia, Daniel Morgan. Although little is known about her early years in the Georgia frontier, it is known that Nancy, in adulthood, was a hardened frontierswoman, an excellent shot, feisty and hot headed. She stood nearly six feet tall and was severely scarred from a bout of smallpox and is thought to be, by some historians, crossed eyed. One early account of Nancy Hart states that she possessed, "no share of beauty—a fact she herself would have readily acknowledged, had she ever enjoyed an opportunity of looking into a mirror."

When the American Revolution came to Elbert County, Nancy, a Whig and ardent patriot was already being referred to as “Wahatche” or, “War Woman,” by local Native American tribes. She felt it was her duty to eradicate British sympathizers and Tories from the region. With her husband fighting for the Georgia militia, Nancy would often disguise herself as a man and wander into British encampments to gather information regarding troop movements and battle plans. She is also thought to have been an active participant in the Battle of Kettle Creek on February 14, 1779. In one account of her heroism, British forces descended upon her home demanding food. She sat the six soldiers down and began to feed them. During the meal, Nancy caught the troopers by surprise and took all six captive. Turning the prisoners over to Whig officials, she demanded that they be summarily hung for stealing her food. A

subsequent discovery, in 1912, of six skeletons, thought to be over one hundred years old near the site of her former home may substantiate this fabled tale of her intrepidness.

Nancy Hart continued to live in the Georgia frontier with her husband and eight children, six sons and two daughters, until the death of Benjamin in the late 1790s. A few years later, around 1803, Nancy's oldest son John Hart moved the family to Henderson County, Kentucky. Nancy Hart lived out her remaining years there, passing away in 1830.

In the years that have followed her passing, Nancy Ann Morgan Hart has been recognized by Georgia officials as a major figure in the state's history and has been memorialized numerous times by the state and individual organizations since her death. The Hartwell Dam and Hartwell Lake, created in 1962 and located north of Augusta, Georgia, are both named in her honor. The neighboring county to the north of Elbert County, was renamed Hart County, in honor of Nancy Hart. She is also found memorialized in name by Hart State Park and the Nancy Hart Highway, or Georgia Route 77. The National Society of the Daughters of the American Revolution Milledgeville, Georgia chapter is the Nancy Hart Chapter. In 1997, Nancy was inducted into Georgia Women of Achievement, which recognizes and honors women of Georgia who have contributed to the state's development. Nancy Hart's name resides within the GWA alongside that of Juliette Gordon Low, the founder of the Girl Scouts of America, Helen Dortch Longstreet, environmentalist, author, activist and wife of Confederate General James Longstreet, and Jeannette Pickering Rankin, the first woman elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.

Then there was the Nancy Hart Militia of LaGrange, Georgia. Upon Colonel LaGrange's arrival in LaGrange he was met by Captain Nancy Morgan and a line of heavily armed and well organized Nancy Harts. Realizing that the all female militia was vastly outnumbered by the battle hardened Union Cavalry, Captain Morgan called for a formal parlay with Colonel LaGrange where she surrendered the unit and the town of LaGrange. Mrs. Morgan's charm and hospitality were overwhelming to the Union colonel who, at the behest of Captain Morgan, over tea and cookies, spared the town from total destruction. The ladies who had once held weapons in the defense of LaGrange now bustled about acquiring food for the officers, establishing hospitals, and staffing medical stations for the wounded Union soldiers and Confederate prisoners of war from the Battle of Fort Tyler several days earlier. A plaque was placed in LaGrange by the State of Georgia which reads in part:

The Nancy Harts mobilized promptly, determined to resist any attempted depredations, but they were spared a trial at arms. Seeing the charmingly militant array formed to meet him, Colonel LaGrange complimented them upon their fearless spirit and fine martial air and, after a brief delay, marched on toward Macon, leaving no scar other than the broken railroad to

deface this gracious Georgia town whose name he chanced to bear.

For the sake of history, Nancy Ann Morgan Hart should not be confused with Nancy Hart (later Nancy Hart Douglas), the hard riding Confederate markswoman, spy, guide, and guerilla fighter of the North Carolina Moccasin Rangers between 1862 and 1865.

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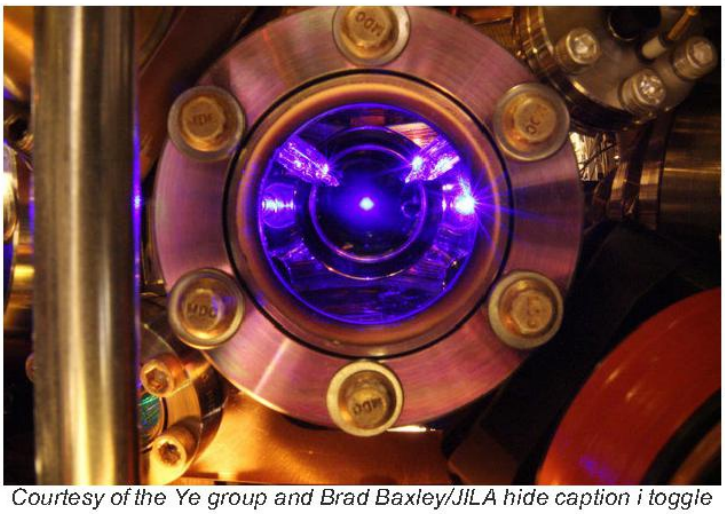
New Clock May End Time As We Know It

November 03, 2014 npr.org



Courtesy of the Ye group and Brad Baxley/JILA hide caption i toggle caption i toggle caption Courtesy of the Ye group and Brad Baxley/JILA Strontium atoms floating in the center of this photo are the heart of the world's most precise clock. The clock is so exact that it can detect tiny shifts in the flow of time itself. Courtesy of the Ye group and Brad Baxley/JILA

Strontium atoms floating in the center of this photo are the heart of the world's most precise clock. The clock is so exact that it can detect tiny shifts in the flow of time itself.

"My own personal opinion is that time is a human construct," says Tom O'Brian. O'Brian has thought a lot about this over the years. He is America's official timekeeper at the National Institute of Standards and Technology in Boulder, Colorado.

To him, days, hours, minutes and seconds are a way for humanity to "put some order in this very fascinating and complex universe around us."

We bring that order using clocks, and O'Brian oversees America's master clock. It's one of the most accurate clocks on the planet: an atomic clock that uses oscillations in the element cesium to count out 0.0000000000000001 second at a time. If the clock had been started 300 million years ago, before the age of dinosaurs began, it would still be keeping time — down to the second. But the crazy thing is, despite knowing the time better than almost anyone on Earth, O'Brian can't explain time.

"We can measure time much better than the weight of something or an electrical current," he says, "but what time really is, is a question that I can't answer for you."

Maybe its because we don't understand time, that we keep trying to measure it more accurately. But that desire to pin down the elusive ticking of the clock may soon be the undoing of time as we know it: The next generation of clocks will not tell time in a way that most people understand.

The New Clock

At the nearby University of Colorado Boulder is a clock even more precise than the one O'Brian watches over. The basement lab that holds it is pure chaos: Wires hang from the ceilings and sprawl across lab tables. Binder clips keep the lines bunched together.

In fact, this knot of wires and lasers actually is the clock. It's spread out on a giant table, parts of it wrapped in what appears to be tinfoil. *Tinfoil?*

"That's research grade tinfoil," says Travis Nicholson, a graduate student here at the JILA, a

joint institute between NIST and CU-Boulder. Nicholson and his fellow graduate students run the clock day to day. Most of their time is spent fixing misbehaving lasers and dealing with the rats' nest of wires. ("I think half of them go nowhere," says graduate student Sara Campbell.)

At the heart of this new clock is the element strontium. Inside a small chamber, the strontium atoms are suspended in a lattice of crisscrossing laser beams. Researchers then give them a little ping, like ringing a bell. The strontium vibrates at an incredibly fast frequency. It's a natural atomic metronome ticking out teeny, teeny fractions of a second.

This new clock can keep perfect time for 5 billion years.

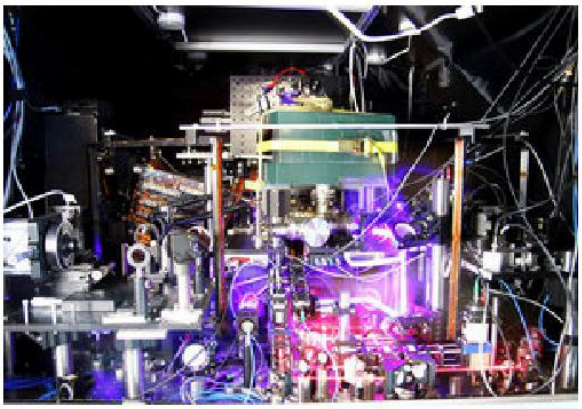
"It's about the whole, entire age of the earth," says Jun Ye, the scientist here at JILA who built this clock. "Our aim is that we'll have a clock that, during the entire age of the universe, would not have lost a second."

But this new clock has run into a big problem: This thing we call time doesn't tick at the same rate everywhere in the universe. Or even on our planet.

Time Undone

Right now, on the top of Mount Everest, time is passing just a little bit faster than it is in Death Valley. That's because speed at which time passes depends on the strength of gravity. Einstein himself discovered this dependence as part of his theory of relativity, and it is a very real effect.

The relative nature of time isn't just something seen in the extreme. If you take a clock off the floor, and hang it on the wall, Ye says, "the time will speed up by about one part in 1016."



Ye group and Baxley/JILA/Flickr hide caption i toggle caption i toggle caption Ye group and Baxley/JILA/Flickr The world's most precise atomic clock is a mess to look at. But it can tick for billions of years without losing a second. Ye group and Baxley/JILA/Flickr

i

The world's most precise atomic clock is a mess to look at. But it can tick for billions of years without losing a second.

That is a sliver of a second. But this isn't some effect of gravity on the clock's machinery. Time itself is flowing more quickly on the wall than on the floor. These differences didn't really matter until now. But this new clock is so sensitive, little changes in height throw it way off. Lift it just a couple of centimeters, Ye says, "and you will start to see that difference."

This new clock can sense the pace of time speeding up as it moves inch by inch away from the earth's core.

That's a problem, because to actually use time, you need different clocks to agree on the

time. Think about it: If I say, 'let's meet at 3:30,' we use our watches. But imagine a world in which your watch starts to tick faster, because you're working on the floor above me. Your 3:30 happens earlier than mine, and we miss our appointment.

This clock works like that. Tiny shifts in the earth's crust can throw it off, even when it's sitting still. Even if two of them are synchronized, their different rates of ticking mean they will soon be out of synch. They will never agree.

The world's current time is coordinated between atomic clocks all over the planet. But that can't happen with the new one.

"At this level, maintaining absolute time scale on earth is in fact turning into nightmare," Ye says. This clock they've built doesn't just look chaotic. It is turning our sense of time into chaos.

Ye suspects the only way we will be able to keep time in the future is to send these new clocks into space. Far from the earth's surface, the clocks would be better able to stay in synch, and perhaps our unified sense of time could be preserved.

But the NIST's chief timekeeper, Tom O'Brian, isn't worried about all this. As confusing as these clocks are, they're going to be really useful.

"Scientists can make these clocks into exquisite devices for sensing a whole bunch of different things," O'Brian says. Their extraordinary sensitivity to gravity might allow them to map the interior of the earth, or help scientists find water and other resources underground.

A network of clocks in space might be used to detect gravitational waves from black holes and exploding stars.

They could change our view of the universe.

They just may not be able to tell us the time.

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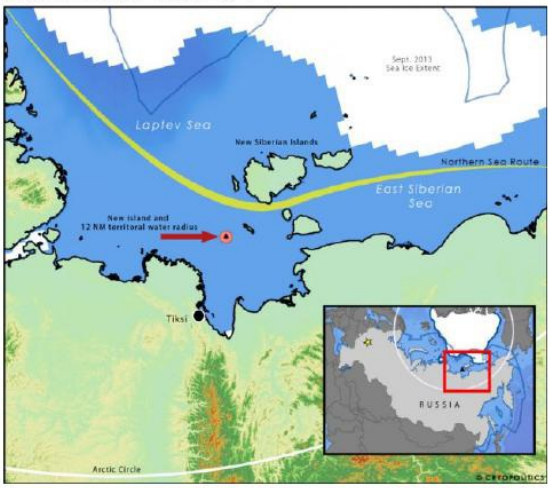
Arctic satellite image of the week: Russia discovers new Arctic island

adn.com

Mia Bennett
November 17, 2014



Map of new island's location and Russia's new territorial waters.Mia Bennett and Cryopolitics

In September 2013, two military helicopter pilots transporting equipment from Tiksi, a port city in northeast Russia, to the New Siberian Islands spotted a previously unknown island in the Laptev Sea.

The discovery took place just a little ways south of the main shipping lanes used for the Northern Sea Route and has now been corroborated by geological surveying.

The Russian-language version of Popular Mechanics notes that the small, low-lying island has been christened "Yaya," or "Яя" in Russian. The rhyming name comes from the Russian word "Я," which means "I", for the pilot of each Mi-26 helicopter essentially shouted, "It was I who found it!" when they spotted the scrap of land.

The pilots happened to fly over the island (73°59′25″ N, 133°05′28 E) in September, when Arctic sea ice is at its lowest extent. September is usually the first full month to be open to shipping along the Northern Sea Route, too. I was unable to find cloud-free Landsat 8 satellite images taken over the location of the new island in September, or any of the other relatively ice-free months for that matter (July, August, and October), but I was able to find a cloud-free image taken on June 16, 2013, when the water was still frozen solid. Even despite all the thick sea ice surrounding the brown speck of land, it still manages to stick out.

Geographically speaking, the discovery reveals the extent to which the Arctic – especially the eastern Russian Arctic – still remains poorly mapped. It's rare to hear of new islands – however small – being discovered elsewhere in the world unless they're due to some recent volcanic activity.

New Siberian islands buildup?

Legally speaking, wile the island is small, its discovery does have certain implications under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). All of the waters around Yaya Island already fall within Russian's exclusive economic zone (EEZ). But Section II explains that territorial seas extend 12 nautical miles outward from a country's coastline. Thus, with the addition of the island to Russian territory, the country will gain 452 square kilometers of territorial seas. Once classified as territorial seas, then the water surface area, the air column above it, and the water column and seabed below it all become part of the

country's sovereign area.

UNCLOS also specifies that countries cannot levy charges on foreign ships for passing through their territorial waters, let alone EEZs. Yet because the waters are ice covered for a majority of the year, Russia is able to enforce additional regulations to prevent pollution, including by levying charges, under Article 234.

Yaya Island's existence will cause hardly any large-scale changes in the eastern Russian maritime Arctic. But what could be more of a game-changer is the uptick in military-related activities occurring around Tiksi and the New Siberian Islands.

The two helicopters that spotted Yaya were, as mentioned, ferrying unspecified equipment to the New Siberian Islands in September 2013 – one year before Russia re-opened a former Soviet military base there. So perhaps more than the *discovery* of the island, it's actually the *discoverers* who form the real story behind the headline.

In next week's Arctic satellite image of the week post, I'll look more into the military buildup taking place at what was their destination: the New Siberian Islands.

***Mia Bennett** administers the Foreign Policy Association's Arctic Blog, and writes about Arctic issues for Eye on the Arctic, a collaborative partnership between public and private circumpolar media organizations.*

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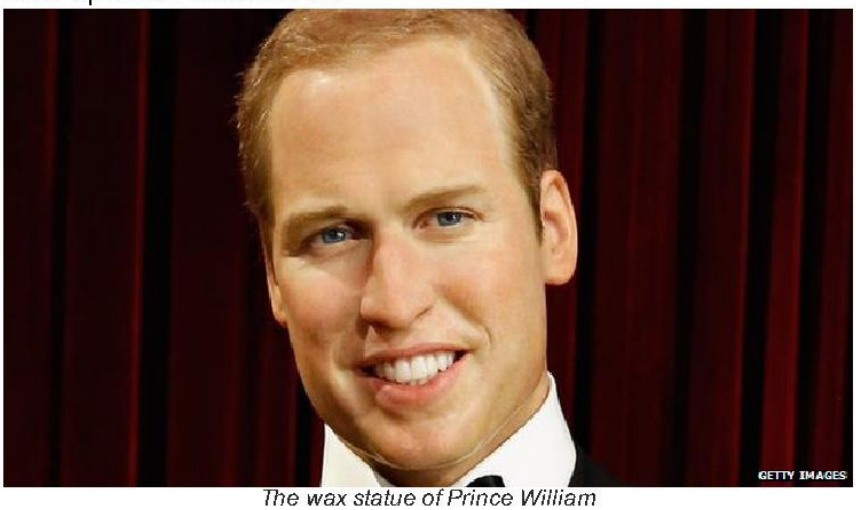
Agency mistakes waxwork for prince

1 December 2014 bbc.com

Last updated at 05:28 ET



The wax statue of Prince William

Not the real deal: Prince William's wax statue had one news agency fooled

A major Japanese news agency has admitted that a photo it published of Prince William was actually of a waxwork statue.

Jiji Press had intended to publish an image of the smiling Duke of Cambridge alongside a story about his planned visit to Japan in February. But instead, a photo of his wax counterpart from the Madame Tussauds attraction in New York was sent out, The Asahi Shimbun reports. The error wasn't picked up until the following day, when a different member of staff noticed the photo was not as lifelike as perhaps first thought.

"The photo was not that of the real McCoy but rather that of a wax figure," Jiji Press said in a correction. It said the mistake happened when an employee did not carefully read the English caption underneath the photo, which indicted that the image was actually of a lifeless wax replica. The agency has since apologised to its readers. "It's a very embarrassing mistake," Naoto Takamura, from Jiji's editorial department, was quoted as saying in The Japan Times. The photo in question was taken in October, when the New York attraction unveiled wax figures of Queen Elizabeth II, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge, and Prince Harry.

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No charges likely for burglar who found body - National - NZ Herald News

nzherald.co.nz

Horrified, screaming intruder phones police after coming upon hanging victim.

Inspector Greg Nicholls. Photo / Sarah Ivey

A burglar who discovered a dead body hanging in a Hamilton house is unlikely to face charges for the break-in.

The 26-year-old man made the grisly discovery early yesterday morning while attempting to burgle the vacant house in the suburb of Fairfield.

Hamilton Police city tactical coordinator Senior Sergeant Freda Grace said the burglar, who called police himself to raise the alarm, had been arrested but not charged.

Mrs Grace said the man was released after helping police with their inquiries.

The incident unfolded in the early hours of yesterday morning when the burglar stumbled across the dead body hanging in the dark.

His screams alerted neighbours who also phoned police. It's understood they thought the screaming was a domestic dispute.

Mrs Grace said the victim had died hours before the burglary but if not for the break-in he may not have been found for days.

She said the death of the man, whose age is unknown, was not being treated as suspicious and had been referred to the coroner.

The burglar was known to police and Mrs Grace hoped the "weird" circumstances would alter his behaviour.

"Hopefully there will be a positive out of it and that he will decide it's not the thing to do. I would be taking that as pretty bad karma."

Mrs Grace said the whole situation was incredibly sad".

"It's sad for the guy who felt so bad that that's what happened to him. Really the whole set of circumstances are just horrid."

She did not know if the dead man's next of kin had been notified.

- NZ Herald

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More ships are navigating the perilous, frigid route through the Arctic Ocean, with large passenger vessels soon to join them.

An ice-covered fjord on Baffin Island opens into Davis Strait on the eastern end of the Northwest Passage. (Photo: NASA ICE /flickr)

In 1906, Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen reached the Pacific Ocean after taking three years to cross the Northwest Passage. The route, skirting Greenland then weaving through Canada's northernmost islands and traveling across the waters of the Arctic Ocean, was considered one of the final frontiers of nautical travel.

Even more than 100 years after Amundsen's feat, few ships attempt this journey. Shifting ice and dense fog can make navigating the perilous and frigid seas an almost impossible challenge.

Map of Nothwest Passage

The Northwest Passage snakes through Arctic waters. (Photo: NASA)

Nonetheless, the Northwest Passage is seeing more and more traffic. In 2013, 18 vessels made the journey. That's a miniscule number compared with major shipping routes, but when you consider that only about 200 boats have ever crossed the passage, it constitutes a significant rise in traffic.

Now the race is on to bring huge cruise ships through the challenging Arctic waterways. Citing the popularity of cruises around Greenland, Iceland and Alaska, several specialty cruise lines are planning to attempt the passage with large commercial vessels in the coming years.

Iceberg near Baffin Island

An iceberg floats near Baffin Island, a major waypoint on the Northwest Passage. (Photo: Andrzej Gibasiewicz/Shutterstock)

This race to cross cruising's final frontier is not without its dangers. The Canadian Army and Coast Guard, aware of the general increase in traffic in the country's northern waters and the interest from large commercial passenger ships, recently held exercises to practice a large-scale rescue of passengers from a sinking cruise ship.

Expedition-style cruises have successfully navigated the Northwest Passage in the past. About 30 years ago, the 100-person Lindblad Explorer was the first cruise ship to complete the journey. Other similarly sized cargo vessels have succeeded as well, but the thousand-berth cruise ships that sail the Caribbean are another matter.

Serenity cruise ship

The Crystal Serenity ship will take 900 cruisers through the Northwest Passage in 2016. (Photo: Frank Perry/Getty Images)

However, that may change. In summer 2016, the Serenity is scheduled to sail out of Anchorage with at least 900 passengers onboard. A month later, it is scheduled to reach New York City after negotiating the Northwest Passage. This will be, by far, the largest expedition to make the journey.

Those who want to take this historic voyage will shell out at least $20,000, plus airfare, to reach Alaska and return home from New York. The cruise line is already taking bookings for the trip, even though it is still nearly two years away.

The Serenity will be in uncharted waters when it comes to overall number of passengers, but a ship of a similar size, luxury cruise liner the World, sailed the passage in 2012. However, there were only 500 passengers and crew onboard.
A glacier reaches a beach near Pond Inlet, a planned stopping point on next year's Serenity

Glacier

expedition. (Photo: Mike Beauregard/flickr)

Like the World, the Serenity will stop at several Arctic hamlets, highlighting one of the most interesting aspects of the Northwest Passage cruising boom. These remote villages, mostly inhabited by indigenous people who have lived a subsistence lifestyle for centuries, can now be visited by hundreds of cruisers at a time. On one hand, the travelers will bring additional income to locals. But these villages have stayed in almost complete isolation since they were founded. If they start receiving multiple ships each year, their traditional lifestyle will undoubtedly be altered.

The recent rise in the accessibility of the Northwest Passage is due to higher than normal ice melt in certain parts of the route. Even with this phenomenon — which many blame on global warming — boats have only a small window during the late summer to pass through the channels. A cool summer could easily make the passage unsafe for large cruise vessels.

However, if the melting continues to be an annual trend, the cruise industry will not be the only one reaping benefits. Cargo ships, which make up a vast majority of the ocean's traffic, will have an alternative to the Panama Canal when it comes time to move between the Atlantic and Pacific. If this is the case, more ships will spend their Augusts in the Arctic.

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Not feeling sexy? Try frogs in a blender!

yahoo.com

November 18, 2014 1:57 PM

Peru's 'frog Juice' Claims Big Health Benefits

Peru's 'frog Juice' Claims Big Health Benefits

LIMA, Peru (AP) — Suffering from stress? Not feeling sexy? High in the Andean mountains, some locals believe putting frogs in a blender is the answer.

Unfortunately, there is no scientific evidence confirming any medicinal benefits from frog juice. And the frogs that

Peruvians use are from the Telmatobius culeus species, a water frog from remote Lake Titicaca that is listed as critically endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Entire frogs are the main ingredient in a juice blend some people in Peru and Bolivia believe can cure asthma, bronchitis, sluggishness and a low sex drive. To make the mix at her food stand in Peru's capital, vendor Maria Elena Cruz grabs a frog from a small aquarium, and whacks its head on the countertop until it's dead.

Then she peels off its skin and drops the frog into a blender with carrots, the Peruvian maca root and honey.

The juice comes out light green in color. Cruz serves it in glasses to her customers.

"Frog juice is good for anemia, bronchitis, bones, the brain, fatigue, stress and it is mostly children, adults, persons with anemia, respiratory issues and sometimes tuberculosis" who come to her stand, Cruz claims.

Customer Cecilia Cahuana, 35, believes this.

"I always come here to drink frog juice because it's good for the children, for anemia, bronchitis and also for older persons, it's extremely good," she said.

Dr. Tomy Villanueva, dean of the Medical College of Lima, says there is "no scientific evidence" that frog juice is a cure for anything, even though it has a place in Andean culture.

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Official: Satan-Loving Teen Lights Church Fire

42min kcra.com

- ORANGEVALE, Calif. —A 15-year-old girl who allegedly worships Satan was arrested Tuesday on suspicion of lighting a fire at her Orangevale church.

The blaze occurred at the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints at the corner of Hazel and Cherry avenues.

Christian Pebbles of Sacramento Metropolitan Fire District said the teen made it clear why she started the blaze, which damaged church pews.

"She hates the church and she worships the devil," Pebbles said. "That's the reason why."

Pebbles said the teen was taken into custody on suspicion of felony arson.

"Well, you know, kids sometimes don't always like what their parents want them to do," said Annette Hilt, the suspect's mother. "Everybody knows that."

There were nearly 50 other church members inside when the blaze took place.

"The flames were about 4 feet high inside the chapel," church facilities director Pat Elmer said.

Fire officials said the goal is to make sure that the girl receives counseling, not to necessarily punish her.

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Okiku and the Nine Plates

The story of Okiku and the Nine Plates is one of the most famous in Japanese folklore, and continues to resonate with audiences today. There are multiple versions. In two common ones, the beautiful servant Okiku refuses to become mistress to a powerful man.

He then breaks or hides one of ten precious delft plates, and tricks Okiku into believing she had done it. Losing a plate would normally be punishable by death. The man then offers her a choice; if she will sleep with him, he will not have her put to death. Virtuous Okiku still refuses. She gets drowned in a well as punishment.

In the more romantic version, which was written during the Meiji period and has clear western influences, Okiku breaks the plate herself to test the love of her fiancé. He spares her the death penalty, believing she had broken his family's heirloom by accident. Then she reveals she did it on purpose, to test him. Enraged, he throws her down a well.

Both stories finish with Okiku becoming a ghost, forever counting the nine remaining plates. Perhaps she is still searching, perhaps she is punishing those who murdered her.

By Teresa S. Newton

The legend of Old Rip, Eastland County's famous horned lizard, spurs a lot of questions. Can a horny toad really hibernate for 31 years? Was the lizard presented to crowds when the courthouse cornerstone was opened in 1928 the same one that had been deposited there in 1897? Did Old Rip, by his own fame, cause the downfall of his own kind?

The story is hard to prove, yet difficult to disprove. People either believe or not. Still, 80 years after his coming-out party, Old Rip draws tourists to view him in a velvet-lined coffin, lying in state at the Eastland County courthouse.

The Texas horned lizard's adventures started July 29, 1897, when 4-year-old Will Wood caught the reptile and named him Blinky. Will's dad, Eastland County Clerk Ernest E. Wood, was heading downtown when he decided to use the horny toad to test a theory. The elder Wood had read about the ancient belief that horned lizards could live up to 100 years in hibernation.

Wood offered Blinky and a note to be placed in the cornerstone of the new courthouse. Officials said they placed the horned frog, the note, a Bible and several newspapers and coins in the small vault.

Years passed, and Eastland County's oil boom brought more people and paperwork. By 1928, the courthouse wasn't big enough, and voters approved building a new one.

"Mr. Wood stopped me and said they were building a new courthouse and there was a horned frog in [the old courthouse]," says 94-year-old Eldress Gattis of Eastland, one of a handful of surviving eyewitnesses to the cornerstone opening. "He was always kidding, but I don't think he would go that far with a practical joke."

Boyce House, editor of the *Eastland Argus-Tribune*, passed the story along to news agencies. By noon on February 18, a crowd reportedly between 1,000 and 3,000 surrounded the courthouse rubble.

Ed S. Pritchard, the county judge, officiated over the cornerstone opening. To ensure no sleight of hand, the Rev. Frank E. Singleton, a Methodist pastor, would observe the procedure. Workers cleared the cornerstone and removed the metal sheet covering the small cavity. Singleton looked in.

"There's the frog!" he called out.

Eugene Day, a local oilman and brother-in-law to Ernest E. Wood, reached in, bringing forth a flat, dusty horned lizard. He passed the toad to Singleton, who gave it to Pritchard. The judge raised the reptile high.

"He's alive!" Pritchard yelled. The crowd roared, pushing children aside in order to see the

small celebrity. Some tried to grab the creature.

"I got there late and got on top of a pile of rubble to see what was going on," says Gattis, 14 at the time. "When they uncovered it, I couldn't see him. Then (Pritchard) held him by the tail, and he was wiggling."

"I am positive there was no hoax perpetrated," preacher Singleton later declared to the Associated Press.

The lizard was renamed Old Rip, for Rip Van Winkle, and placed on display in a local store window. Newspaper reporters quoted zoological experts on the plausibility of surviving a three-decade sleep. Articles from throughout the nation reported eyewitness accounts of similar incidents with horned lizards, frogs and similar creatures.

Texas Christian University sent a biology team to examine Old Rip. An X-ray revealed a broken leg. His horns and spikes were worn down, possibly from trying to escape his prison. His mouth and eyes appeared sealed shut, but it was still hibernation season. Otherwise, he was healthy.

Rip rested peacefully, but not those around him. When cynics claimed Day, Singleton or Pritchard brought a live horny toad in case the original was dead, local businessman Hiram McCandliss offered $1,000 to anyone who could find a horned toad in February – a near-impossible feat since the lizards were hibernating underground. Will Wood attributed the horned lizard's survival to the Bible enclosed with him.

The curious swarmed to Eastland to view the natural oddity. Merchants and the chamber of commerce were ecstatic. Postcards with Old Rip's official portrait sold at a brisk pace.

Demand for horned toads exploded. Zoos wanted them. A local gas station offered a horned lizard with each fill-up. The Dallas Advertising League quickly sold 600 lizards at the International Advertising Association of the World convention in Detroit. Sid Sackett of Coleman, the only known horned lizard breeder at the time, saw prices jump from five cents a head to 25 cents.

College professors in Brownwood prepared to seal a horned lizard in an airtight container to test the hibernation theory. Eastland County planned to place a horny toad in the new courthouse cornerstone that May. In both instances, the Fort Worth Humane Society intervened, and the creatures were released.

That spring, Old Rip slowly became more animated, finally eating and drinking after four or five weeks. He was displayed at events across the nation. President Calvin Coolidge delayed 300 visitors to meet with Eastland's celebrity. Rip became an item in "Ripley's Believe It Or Not."

Back home in Eastland, Old Rip's abode was a fish bowl filled with sand in a store window. He entertained visitors by eating harvester ants, every horny toad's favorite food. Eventually he settled in with Will Wood's family in Eastland.

Life with the Wood children provided adventure. Edith Wood Grissom, Will's older daughter, recalled Old Rip for an oral history project in the 1970s.

"Old Rip was my pet. He dashed from an ant bed in front of a truck with me in pursuit, and later to a vacant lot where I had released 250 horned frogs," she recounted. "He was easy to find as he was gray with worn horns and a limp from a broken leg. He hibernated in a goldfish bowl, and I put him on the back porch. He froze."

The legendary lizard died of pneumonia Jan. 19, 1929, 11 months after his courthouse release.

Will Wood had Old Rip preserved, courtesy of the Barrow Undertaking Company. The National Casket Company provided a tiny casket. Grieving friends said goodbye during an extended visitation at the funeral home and later at the courthouse.

But even death wasn't the end of the Old Rip story. County officials allowed him to travel to fairs and exhibitions. After World War II, the Wood family returned Old Rip to a courthouse enclosure.

Old Rip became a part of the Eastland economy for decades with the Old Rip Café, Old Rip Cap Co. and an Old Rip soda, produced by a local bottling company.

Legendary cartoon director Chuck Jones borrowed from the cornerstone story for his film classic *One Froggy Evening*. The character, Michigan J. Frog, is the symbol for the WB, the Warner Brothers television network.

Residents celebrate Old Rip with a ceremony each Feb. 18 at the courthouse. Local dignitaries and school children gather to repeat the Old Rip Oath, which provides they keep his legend alive. Ripfest is held on the first Saturday of October.

Old Rip's kin are hardly seen in Eastland County anymore. Pesticide overuse in the 1960s and 1970s and the invasion of fire ants harmed the harvester ant, horned lizards' main food. The lizards have disappeared from East and Central Texas, with only a few reported in the Dallas-Fort Worth area and Milam County, says Lee Ann Linam, president of the Horned Lizard Conservation Society.

In 1967 the state of Texas made the sale of a horned lizard illegal. In 1977 the reptiles were added to the state's threatened species list. In the 1980s ownership of a horned toad became off limits. The Horned Lizard Conservation Society was formed in 1990 to save the beloved critter.

Linam says the average Texas horned lizard lives only five to 10 years, but adds, "Old Rip was a very unusual horned lizard."

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Old Mystery Is Cleared Up

Identity Of Woman Who Danced Self To Death Finally Established - Or Is It?

After three-quarters of a century, the exciting mystery of the unknown lady who "danced herself to death" at historic Graham Springs, Harrodsburg, has been solved by the revelations of an aged Lexingtonian who only recently learned accidentally that there had been any mystery at all about the lady's identity and was surprised to learn that the world had been in the least excited about the dramatic incident of antebellum days, and least of all that it was a mystery.

In front of the hotel at Graham Springs, on the expansive grounds that surround that beautiful resort is an old monument telling about the "unknown lady" buried here who in the gaiety of one of the nightly social functions held there before the '60s, dropped dead on the ballroom floor while dancing. The crowd that gathered around the beautiful lady was amazed and mystified to discover that not only did her escort not know who she was, but no one present knew her. All that was known was that she had come from "down South, and during the long years since, she has been referred to as the "unknown lady" and her grave as the "lone and mysterious grave."

The solution of the mystery after all this time came as unexpected as did the death of the young lady. Joseph W. Adams, of Lexington, happened to mention the incident recently to James Rupp who lives on Loudon Avenue. Mr. Rupp said "Why, I know who she was – you say nobody has found out in all these years?" and then the story was unfolded by Mr. Rupp.

"When a boy about 10 years old, living at Tazewell, Tenn., Joe Sewell, who was 40 years old then, told me about his wife 'dancing herself to death at Harrodsburg.' Her maiden name was Molly Black and she was Sewell's second wife. I think they were estranged at the time, as Sewell had a spirit of wanderlust and at the time of her death he was on the road with a show, he told me. It seems that she had gone to the famous springs to enjoy the gay whirl of the social life of those days, as was the general custom in the South. Today with modern news facilities, such a mystery would be solved in a few hours, of course, but in those days of slow travel and communication it is easy to conceive that her folks probably thought she was on an extended visit to relatives and long afterward learned of her disappearance only to attribute it to her sudden death in some out-of-the-way place unknown to them.

"Sewell's mother, whose name was Ann Kelly and with whom his wife had been living, was quite wealthy, and Sewell frequently had an urge to travel and see the world. He said his wife, Molly Black, had a small son at the time of her death, who was probably brought up in Laurel County, Ky., as Millie(?) Black was born there."

So the mystery is solved, and if there is space on the monument over the "long grave" at Graham Springs, the word "unknown" may be erased and "Mollie Black, wife of Joe Sewell, Tazewell, Tenn.

The above article was taken from a newspaper clipping in the Harrodsburg Historical Society library file. Although the newspaper was not identified as to name or date, it was possibly a Lexington paper sometime in the early 1900s.

A 160 Year Old Missing Person Case

(Editor's Note: The following was received from an investigator in Tennessee who is interested in identifying the unknown girl who danced herself to death at Graham Springs more than a century and a half ago. Any reader who may have information, clues, etc. is encouraged to contact him.)

In 1998 I worked the 30 year old Tent Girl case in Scott County. It took 10 years to find the missing link to that case but was finally able to positively identify the girl.

For more information on this case, go to http://www.angelfire.com/tn3/masterdetective2/ Since then I have become involved with a group of people called the DoeNetwork (www.doenetwork.org) and we work unidentified cases throughout the world.

I first learned about the Harrodsburg case in late June. I was looking for an adventure in Kentucky and this one showed up in the search. And she was right up my alley! A Jane Doe.... in Kentucky – more than a century ago!

"The Lady Who Danced Herself To Death" is about a 160 year old case! By far the oldest Jane Doe case I have ever encountered. Fitting she should be in Kentucky's oldest town of Harrodsburg -- Buried at the edge of Young's Park. She will be, by far, the oldest case soon to grace the files of the DoeNetwork.

There are several clues left behind as to who she might have been... alias, Virginia Stafford ... maybe Mollie Black Sewell? As I communicated with the Mercer County Public Library and a member of the local historical society ...I learned about her registering as Miss Virginia Stafford, a fictitious name. She claimed to be the daughter of a Louisville Judge... but it seems this particular judge didn't have a daughter. Might there have been a clue left behind in Louisville folklore?

And years later ... Mr. Joe Sewell in Tazewell, Tennessee allegedly claims that estranged wife, Mollie Black Sewell, was the mystery woman. Even further rumors that she had a child who grew up in Laurel County, Kentucky. Maybe even unaware of his past? Maybe something that local historians from those areas can help lend a clue.

I have uncovered a clue that a man named Joe Sewell did exist during that time period in Tazewell ...but I have seen nothing on Mollie Sewell or a Mollie Black. And since none of the family ever officially came forward to verify any of the pieces to this mystery, this leaves her with a tentative ID at best.

The initial lure to the tale for me was the ghost story. I indeed did spend an evening at the park. I hoped to catch a glimpse of the girl .... who in Dr. Lynwood Montell's book, *Ghosts along the Cumberland, ...*still haunts the park. Could a clue lie in the southern tales of apparitions dancing in the park? Try as I might ... she and I did not cross paths that night.

But are there those out there that have seen what they think to be the spirit of the "Girl Who Danced Herself To Death" at Graham Springs ... around 160 years ago?

I have to wonder how time has distorted the tale ... what really happened that night at the hotel? Why did she use a fictitious name .... and I venture further to say ... is she still here among us?

On a case like this one, a different approach is required. I can't find a private investigator ... or check driving records or the NCIC. We have to go back a bit more ... folklore, ghost stories and genealogy records. I hope anyone out there that might have information of any kind on the case would share it with me.

I will also be getting in touch with the good people of Laurel County and Jefferson County in Kentucky as well as Claiborne County Tennessee.

If you have any information about this case please contact me at: Todd Matthews, 121 Short Street, Livingston, TN 38570, 931-397-3893, or email me at jtmatthews@twlakes.net

One of Henry Clay's Ghosts

Ashland, an impressive early 19th Century Federal style estate in Lexington, was the home of the celebrated 19th-century Kentucky politician Henry Clay. Clay, who served as a Senator from Kentucky, as the Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, as well as Secretary of State for John Quincy Adams, is still considered a leading figure in Kentucky history, and an important figure in the early days of the republic. Popularly known as "The Great Compromiser", Clay habitually did his best to seek out common ground on difficult issues. Clay seemed to embody some of the contradictions himself. A slave owner who favored emancipation. a war hawk who aggressively pushed the War of 1812, and then played a key role in negotiating peace. Clay was a key player in many of the most important crises in American politics during the first half of the 19th Century. He began construction on Ashland, his beloved estate located on the Eastern edge of Downtown Lexington, in 1804, and lived between there and Washington until he died of tuberculosis in 1852. Some people say you can still see him there today.

Clay was a notoriously hard worker, who spent house in his study going over papers, writing letters, and puttering about in the ink stained business of early American politics. When he took a break from his labors, it was Clay's habit to stretch out and lean against the mantelpiece in his study.

It's in the room that many people have claimed to see the pale figure of a distinguished, white-haired man, dressed in a finely tailored black of the style of the mid-19th Century. This figure is reported to look much like Henry Clay must have looked towards the end of his life.

Is the ghost of Henry Clay haunting Ashland? Is he leaning up against the fireplace in his study, taking a well-deserved break from his labors? Or is he waiting for someone to bring him the next crisis to solve. Ashland is a historic site open to the public, if you go for yourself you may find some answers.

Interestingly, this is only one of the ghosts of Henry Clay. Oaklawn Manor, the home of Clay's great friend Senator Alexander Porter, and a home that Clay visited many times during his life, also claims to be visited by the spirit of Henry Clay. A figure with the same description as the ghost at Ashland is often seen strolling the plantation house. Perhaps this double haunting is Clay's last compromise. Torn between his duties to his home and his loyalty to his friend, Clay's spirit somehow found a way to haunt two different houses.

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35°54′43″N 79°02′10″W

The **Order of Gimghoul** is a collegiate secret society headquartered at Hippol (or Gimghoul) Castle in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.[1][2] The order was founded in 1889 by Robert Worth Bingham, Shepard Bryan, William W. Davies, Edward Wray Martin, and Andrew Henry Patterson, who were University of North Carolina students at the time.[3]

The society is open to "notable" male students (rising juniors and higher), and faculty members by invitation. The society centers itself around the legend of Peter Dromgoole, a student who mysteriously disappeared from campus in 1833.[4][5] The founders originally called themselves the Order of Dromgoole, but later changed it to the Order of Gimghoul, "in accord with midnight and graves and weirdness," according to archives.[3]

Tradition has it that the order held to the "Dromgoole legend and the ideals of Arthurian knighthood and chivalry." From all accounts, the order is social in nature, and is believed to have no clandestine agenda. Membership is closed and information about the order is strictly confidential as is access to archives less than 50 years old.[3]

The meeting place of the order, Hippol Castle, was built in 1924 at a cost of nearly $50,000.[6] Thirteen hundred tons of rough stone were used in its construction giving it the appearance of a castle.[7] It is located at the end of Gimghoul Road, not far from Old Chapel Hill Cemetery on campus near Carmichael Auditorium.[8] According to real estate records, the 2.15-acre (8,700 m2) site is owned by a non-profit corporation entitled the Order of the Gimghoul and has a taxable value of over $1 million.[1][9]

The Chris Gethard Show, a public access television show in New York, has filmed a number of "exposés" on the Order, none of which have substantiated any of the show's allegations.[10]

1. ^ Jump up to: ***a b*** "HALLOWEEN: Secret Society In Chapel Hill Owns Gimghoul Castle". Raleigh Telegram. Retrieved 2012-10-31.
2. **Jump up ^** "Gimghoul Castle". WelcomeToNC.com. Retrieved 2008-05-04.
3. ^ Jump up to: ***a b c*** "Inventory of the Order of Gimghoul Records, 1832-2006 (bulk 1940-1997)". UNC Libraries. Retrieved 2008-05-04.
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5. **Jump up ^** Elliston, Jon; Priestley, Kent (2007). "Positively Goole-ish". *North Carolina Curiosities: Quirky Characters, Roadside Oddities & Other Offbeat Stuff*. Guilford, CT: The Globe Pequot Press. p. 102. ISBN 0-7627-4366-2. Retrieved 2008-05-09.
6. **Jump up ^** "Gimghoul Castle". Carrboro.com. Retrieved 2008-05-04.
7. **Jump up ^** Valle, Kirsten (2004-10-29). "Secret society prompts ghoulish legends". The Daily Tar Heel. Retrieved 2008-05-09.
8. **Jump up ^** "Gimghoul Castle, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, N.C.". *North*

Carolina Postcards. Retrieved 2008-05-04.
9. **Jump up ^** "Orange County Land Records". *Data Summary Information Page Gimghoul Castle*. Retrieved 2008-05-09.
10. **Jump up ^** "Murf Vs. Gimghoul: HOUR-LONG SCUMBUM EXPOSING SPECIAL". Retrieved 20 December 2013.

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The Origin of the "Jackson Whites"

History and Legend among the Ramapo Mountain People[1]

HISTORY AND LEGEND are two different uses of the past. They should not be confused with each other or with the past itself. The past is what actually happened; history and legend are what is written and traditionally said, respectively, about the past. The difference may be elusive at times. A legend might originate in oral tradition but eventually be written down, and history is sometimes given oral expression, as, for example, in a lecture. Yet the distinction between history and legend is important. The failure to distinguish between the two has had serious consequences for the group image of the Ramapo Mountain people.

Living in the Ramapo Mountains of northern New Jersey and southern New York State, the mountain people constitute a separate group, geographically isolated by their mountain residence and socially by their family and kinship system and racially mixed ancestry. Their families tend to be large, nuclear, and male headed. Endogamous marriages multiply the kinship ties and result in increased social solidarity. In fact, the kindred is coterminous with the group. The mountain people determine who is a member of the group by finding out to whom a person is related. Because of an alleged Indian strain in their ancestry, the people think of themselves as different from either blacks or mulattoes, but, because of their dark skins, they are not considered white. They identify with the American Indians, but they possess no authentic Indian cultural traits. The net result is that they constitute a separate ethnic group. They refer to their racial identity as "colored," by which they mean simply non-white.

There are numerous other racially mixed groups throughout the eastern United States, such as the Lumbees in North Carolina, the Melungeons in eastern Tennessee, and the Wesorts in Maryland, to mention a few.[2] Being themselves more oriented toward oral, rather than written, communication and considered by historians too unimportant for inclusion in history books, many of these groups have folk leg-

[1] A shorter version of this paper was delivered at the annual meeting of the American Folklore Society in Washington, D. C., on November 11, 1971. It is part of a book to be published by the Rutgers University Press.

[2] For a survey of these groups see Brewton Berry, *Almost White* (London, 1963).

Residents asking why city smells like cat urine

yahoo.com

NEW CASTLE, Pa. (AP) — Residents are hoping tests on air samples can explain why their western Pennsylvania city smells like cat urine.

New Castle residents began noticing the smell Nov. 1 in the city about 45 miles northwest of Pittsburgh. The New Castle News (http://bit.ly/1FqBUCa) says the smell is still lingering near a sewage treatment plant in the city's Mahoningtown neighborhood.

State environmental officials don't believe the odor is harmful, but they don't yet know what's causing it.

A spokeswoman for the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection says on-site monitoring didn't detect any hazardous substances in the air.

But tests on air samples to determine what's causing the smell will take weeks to complete. The DEP is also testing wastewater to determine whether it's causing the smell.

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Outside Guide: Colorado roadside attractions

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denverpost.com

The world of travel and amusement has changed in the 24 years since "Roadside America" first hit bookstores — essentially kick-starting a national pastime of seeking out offbeat, road-trip Americana.

Co-author Doug Kirby says that while many other travel guides now highlight quirky attractions alongside mainstream cultural institutions, "Roadside America" keeps up by maintaining a detailed website (RoadsideAmerica.com) that includes blogs, maps and travel tips, and by employing an iPhone application that allows travelers to post real-time pictures and comments.

"People love these places," Kirby said earlier this month from his California office, where he was planning a fresh trip to Colorado in search of new oddball sites. Colorado is among the best places in the country for such attractions, Kirby said, because of its combination of family-friendly fun, Old West nostalgia and counterculture kitsch. "We feel like it's a state," he said, "that has more of a sense of humor than most."

Check out Page 4D for a roundup of some of Colorado's offbeat roadside attractions highlighted by "Roadside America" and other guides to quirky travel.

1. The Baldpate Inn

Located near Rocky Mountain National Park, this inn was named after Earl Derr Biggers' 1913 novel, "Seven Keys to Baldpate." When it first opened nearly a century ago, the inn offered souvenir keys to all of its guests. But during World War I and the subsequent metal shortage, guests began leaving keys instead of taking them. Over the years the inn has accumulated between 20,000 and 30,000 keys, including some from every state in the nation, which are displayed on the ceiling, and others used by the likes of Adolf Hitler and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. *4900 S. Highway 7, Estes Park; 970-586-6151 or baldpateinn.com***2. "Vampire" grave**

Cemeteries, especially old ones, will always lure the non-grieving with their serenity, pastoral landscaping and weathered infrastructure. But the northwest corner of Lafayette's Municipal Cemetery has the additional spook factor of being the final resting place of a man whom town legend has long described as a Transylvanian vampire. Hard to say how a real bloodsucker might have met his demise in Lafayette, but for generations, locals have recorded such lore as "having seen a tall thin man with a black coat, dark hair, and long fingernails sitting on top of the (grave) stone," Pam Grout writes in "Colorado Curiosities" (Globe Pequot, 2006). Grout goes on to explain that there are few hard records detailing the life of one Fodor Glava, whose name appears on the Lafayette gravestone. Nonetheless, the site continues to get visits from many a thrillseeker. *Lafayette Municipal Cemetery, comer of North 111th and West Elm streets, Lafayette***3. Covered-wagon eatery**

Current owners Geoff and Dana Diaz had some idea about the popularity of the roughly 400-square- foot wagon restaurant they took over three years ago and turned into its latest incarnation as a drive-up Mexican restaurant. But that fact really hit home on the first day of business when, without any advertising, dozens of people queued up to patronize the longtime, covered-wagon-shaped landmark, which in the past has been, among other names, Chuck Wagon Burgers and O'Brien's Wings-N-Things. "It's really awesome inside," Dana Diaz says. "It has everything to run a restaurant — a hood system, a little tiny Pepsi machine, our grill and cutting table fit perfect... and there's a rest- room in there, too!" *Big Mama's Burritos, 9730 W. 44th Ave., Wheat Ridge; 303-420-9733 or bigmamas burrito.com*

4. Casa Bonita

Among the pawnshops and dollar stores, taquerias and cheap motels that line West Colfax, it's impossible to ignore the strip-mall facade of this "Beautiful House" — the 85-foot-tall, salmon-colored tower dotted with 22-karat gold leaf, guarded by a statue of an Aztec emperor, and flanked by an authentic Mexican fountain that was shipped to the site in pieces. Some come for the cliff diving and indoor theme- park atmosphere, others for the nostalgia, which was underscored by a widely viewed 2006 episode of "South Park." Because any kid who grows up 'round these parts either has a birthday, or attends a birthday, at Casa Bonita. *6715 W. Colfax Ave., Lakewood; 303-232-5115 or casabonitadenver.com*

5. Coney Island Hot Dog Stand

Tourists and locals alike can't resist the chance to get a taste of Brooklyn in the Rocky Mountains at this iconic weiner-shaped diner. Originally built on West Colfax in the 1960s and later relocated to Conifer, the big hot dog's current home in Bailey boasts an updated stucco facade and refurbished counters and booths. *10 Old Stagecoach Road, Bailey; 303-838-4210*

6. World's Wonder View Tower

This aging oddity was built in the mid-1920s by C.W. Gregory, whom some refer to as "Colorado's P.T. Barnum," and his partner Myrtle Le Bow. The draw? On a clear day from the top of the 65-foot-tall tower, visitors can see six states — Colorado, Kansas, Nebraska, Wyoming, New Mexico, and South Dakota. The site was confirmed in the 1930s to be the highest point between New York and Denver. But the real attraction is the barrage of artwork and obscurities, including a stuffed two-headed calf, that visitors pass as they climb a winding, increasingly narrow, paint-chipped staircase on their ways to the roof. *30121 Frontage Road, Genoa; 719-763-2309*

7. Burro monuments

If a man's best friend is his dog, it's a safe bet that man made a living doing something other than high-country mining. Because the burro is a miner's best friend, at least that's the impression visitors are left with after viewing two Fairplay monuments erected to honor the late burros Prunes and Shorty. The former's monument is a short, free-standing wall with a plaque and his collar protected under glass. Shorty, who was reportedly "the town mooch," and his dog, Bum, are more humbly honored with a monument on the courthouse lawn. *Corner of Seventh and Front streets, Fairplay*

8. Buckskin Joe Frontier Town & Railway

Gunfights, enigmatic medicine men, sunset horseback rides and one of the state's iconic

scenic railroads sum up the allure of this distinctly Colorado theme park resurrected from the architectural remains of an actual frontier town. But it's the "live hangings," which happen daily during Buckskin Joe's trademark show, that really get the attention of road-tripping lookie loos. "It's like stepping back into an 1860s frontier town," general manager Vicky Casey says of the park, which is open seven days a week, mid-May through mid-September and weekends in October. *1193 Fremont County Road 3A, Cañon City; 719-275-5149 or buckskinjoe.com*

9. Bishop Castle

Jim Bishop, now 66, has spent the better part of his life constructing his monument to hardworking people. But this Pueblo welder revealed his eccentricity early in life as he purchased this land for $1,250 in 1959 when he was just 15 years old. Now his ongoing work in progress attracts thousands of visitors a year. It began as a family mountain cottage but has evolved into a medieval-meets-space-age cathedral made from wrought iron and native stone. It's nestled in the San Isabel National Forest. Bishop asks only for donations, which he turns into nonprofit charitable contributions. "We drove winding roads amid towering cliffs and trees, with several wildlife sightings," one sojourner chronicles at RoadsideAmerica.com. "Bishop's Castle appeared suddenly as we rounded a curve and the joy of discovery excited all three generations in our car." *12705 CO-165, between Wetmore and Rye; 719-485-3040*

10. Cano's Beer Can Castle

Highly decorated Vietnam veteran Dominic "Cano" Espinoza is behind this oasis of outsider art in the San Luis Valley. According to local lore, he was driven to build the castle by his mother's constant nagging that he do something with an abundance of empty beers cans. But the edifice is actually made from beer cans, hubcaps and scrap metal, and serves as Cano's monument to peace and faith. Of his castle, which was more than two decades in the making, he has been quoted saying, "One man's junk is my treasure." *Corner of 10th Avenue and State Street, Antonito***11. Alfred Packer cannibal site**

It's been hard for even the most thorough academics to sort fact from fiction in the tale of Colorado's infamous yet beloved alleged cannibal. A must-see stop for lovers of Alfred Packer lore is the site 2 1/2 miles south of Lake City, where he is said to have consumed the others in his ill-fated 1874 prospecting party — a trip Chief Ouray himself reportedly warned Packer against because of the brutal winter weather conditions. The site is marked by a rock and a plaque for the victims. Nearby Packer attractions include mementos at the Hinsdale County Museum, including a skull fragment from one of his victims. *Just off Route 149 about 2 miles south of the Lake City miniature-golf course.***12. Giant arrows**

Past owners of the Mud Creek Hogan Trading Post in Mancos hit advertising gold when, in 1986, they installed a collection of plywood tepees next to gigantic planted arrows made from telephone poles. "Roadside America" co-author Doug Kirby says there are other such examples of Native Americana around the country, but these arrows are among the best preserved. Mud Creek's current owners report that the attraction succeeds in its original intent: luring road trippers through the door so they can drop a few dollars on authentic American Indian wares. *38651 U.S. 160, Mancos*

Owner of Villisca Ax Murder House stunned that man stabbed himself there

omaha.com

- THE WORLD-HERALD

A century after the Moores were killed in their Villisca, Iowa, home, the building on Second Street has been remade into a tourist attraction.

Posted: Friday, November 7, 2014 6:24 am

Owner of Villisca Ax Murder House stunned that man stabbed himself there By Jay Withrow / World-Herald staff writer The Omaha World-Herald

The owner of the Villisca Ax Murder House says she was stunned to hear that a man stabbed himself during a “recreational paranormal” visit early Friday.

Martha Linn, 77, of Corning, Iowa, said nothing like Friday’s injury has ever occurred at the house during her ownership.

“It’s kind of shocking to wake up and hear that someone has nearly died at your tourist attraction,” she said.

The Montgomery County Sheriff’s Office said Robert Steven Laursen Jr., 37, of Rhinelander, Wisconsin, suffered the self-inflicted injury about 12:45 a.m. at the former home of Josiah B. and Sara Moore. The Moores were bludgeoned to death with an ax while they slept in their beds in June 1912. Six children were also slain. The case remains unsolved.

Laursen was taken by a Villisca ambulance to Clarinda Regional Health Center and then transferred by helicopter to Creighton University Medical Center in Omaha. A hospital representative Friday evening said that Laursen or a relative asked the hospital not to release his condition.

Montgomery County Sheriff Joe Sampson said no criminal charges are planned because investigators found no indication of foul play.

Sampson also said he has never run into any problems at the Villisca house before Friday.

“We can only speculate” about what happened, he said about Laursen, who was at the Ax Murder House with “a couple of others.”

“These people (paranormal investigators) are at the house all the time,” Sampson said.

Linn, who has owned the home at 508 E. Second St. since 1994, said she has two tour guides who handle the overnight stays at the house, which has no electricity. Linn and her late husband, Darwin, removed all electrical and plumbing fixtures in an effort to restore the house as much as possible to its condition at the time of the murders.

The home is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Day tours and overnight stays can be purchased at the home.

The home's website promotes the paranormal possibilities, and Linn says many "investigative teams" have visited.

"They all hope something will come to them," she said. "Sometimes they like to tempt fate."

But Linn said she's "absolutely sick" about Friday's incident. "I can't imagine why somebody would do something like this to himself."

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Posted in Iowa on *Friday, November 7, 2014 6:24 am.*

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Oxford's Famous 'Shark House' Is Now Up For Rent

Nov. 11, 2014, 4:56 PM 503
Nov. 11, 2014, 4:56 PM
businessinsider.com

The house, featuring a 7.5 metre fibreglass shark, is described as "period cottage forming part of a famous city landmark."

Almy/The Guardian

Just when you thought it was safe to go back in the loft … Headington's famous shark house has been put up to rent. The property, which is perhaps the east Oxford suburb's most notable residence, is being advertised at £519 a week, or £2,250 a month, and is being marketed at families or mature students.

Letting agents at Scott Fraser describe the three-bedroom house on New High Street, as a "period cottage with stylish modern interiors forming part of a famous city landmark". The rent is higher than the average for Headington quoted by property website Zoopla, which puts the typical cost of a three-bedroom home at £335 a week. However, all of the bedrooms are ensuite and the property has been recently refurbished.

The 7.5 metre fibreglass shark attracted worldwide fame when it arrived on this otherwise fairly remarkable street in August 1986, on the 41st anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bomb on Nagasaki, seemingly as a statement of the homeowner's feeling of despair at the nuclear threat of the time. Despite the local council's attempts to get rid of it, the shark survived, thanks to an appeal to the then secretary of state for the environment, Michael Heseltine.

It has been a feature of the Headington skyline ever since, and the brochure quotes a previous tenant of the house saying: "You quickly get used to people taking photographs outside and it does not really affect living there. On the rare occasions that we are asked about the shark the people have always been very polite and genuinely interested in the story. It has been a lot of fun living in such a local landmark."

The advert suggests that it might be: "suitable for a family who are passionate about being involved with the local community and who will enjoy not only living in but living with the famous Headington shark," adding "sorry no pets". As if your goldfish would ever have been happy living there.

This article originally appeared on guardian.co.uk

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Panic grips school over vampire claims

Latest update October 31st, 2014 8:00 PM

Oct 17, 2014 PORTIA NGWAKO Other News Comments

Panic grips school over vampire claims

Panic and fear gripped Tshwaragano Primary School in Old Naledi when scores of pupils stormed out of classrooms claiming their peers had turned into blood thirst vampires.

The Primary School Leaving Examinations (PSLE) were disrupted when pandemonium broke out last Friday as pupils shouted and stormed out of classrooms alleging their peers wanted to suck their blood.

Furious parents who demanded answers went to the school to pick their children but were told to wait until the end of the examination.

The same school recently had reports of children mysteriously collapsing.

The student at the centre of the controversy almost attracted the wrath of the parents when she confessed she was on a satanic mission to initiate one of the girls in her classroom.

Confronted by angry parents, the girl confessed, “Its not me. I was made to join this. We always have meetings in a certain place at night.”

One of the parents who went to school, Richard Kumbulani told The Voice he rushed to school after receiving a call from his wife that there was terror at school.

He said he feared for his daughter’s life because she was writing the final examinations.

“We do not know what is happening. Even the school head has not come out to address us. I am worried because my daughter might fail. This is not a suitable environment and I do not think she was able to concentrate,” he said.

Another parent, Ezekiel Gareobone said teachers were not explaining what happened except that students had exam fever.

“They didn’t even give us feedback about the mysteriously collapsing students. My main worry is that these things only happen at Tshwaragano Primary School,” he said and continued,

“Other schools are also writing PSLE examinations. What kind of exam fever is this? This child’s parents must seek help immediately. This is satanism. There are some students with this demonic spirit and this will continue if no intervention is made,” he said.

Efforts to get comment from the school head Spankie Kelopang were unsuccessful as she was reportedly preparing examination papers.

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Pastor accuses Starbucks of flavoring its coffee with semen of 'sodomites'

dailydot.com

If you're a coffee snob, you might not think that, say, the skim latte at Starbucks tastes very good. But you probably don't think it's flavored with the semen of men who have sex with other men, as this New York City pastor surmised in a bizarre YouTube rant about the coffee chain.

The video was produced by Pastor James David Manning, the head pastor at the ATLAH (All the Land Anointed Holy) Worldwide Missionary Church in Harlem, New York. Last week, Pastor Manning made headlines when he claimed that Starbucks was "ground zero" for the Ebola virus, as Ebola patient Dr. Craig Spencer, a "sodomite" and fellow Harlem resident, allegedly frequented the coffee shop.

Manning's remarks sparked protests from gay-rights activists, who stood outside the ATLAH church handing out free coffee and chanting "Stop the hate." This week on his YouTube channel, the Manning Network, Manning fired back, accusing the "sodomite" activists of doling out semen-spiked Starbucks coffee to innocent passersby:

"They had a big bucket of Starbucks coffee. They said that this church is a hate church, and that I'm a hate preacher...Starbucks is a place where these types frequent and a lot of body fluids are exchanged there. But the thing that I was not aware of is that there has been information that has been released… what Starbucks was doing, is they were taking specimens of male semen, and they were putting it in the blends of their lattes. Now, this is the absolute truth."

Manning added that Starbucks was discriminating in the male "specimens" it adds to its blends. He speculated that they likely didn't use garden-variety semen to spice up their blends, but rather, the semen of "sodomites." Said Manning, "Semen flavours up the coffee, and makes you thinks you're having a good time."

Of course, the "information" Manning was citing wasn't actually from a news story, but rather a satirical article from a website called the Inquisitr, which "reported' on an FDA investigation into Starbucks spiking its coffee with semen. Apparently lacking the critical faculties necessary to distinguish fact from parody, Manning ran with the article—and he ran fast.

This isn't the first time that Manning has spouted bigoted nonsense on his YouTube channel. In the past, he's claimed that Vladimir Putin will out Obama as a "homo" in the next 90 days (his deadline is next Thursday), that Obama is a Muslim, and that Americans are addicted to "homo heroin."

There is little chance that Manning is onto something here, but just in case, don't order your next latte with extra froth.

HT Pink News UK | Screengrab via ATLAH Worldwide/YouTube

Peg Powler is described as crowned by green tresses, which are usually symbolic of a river deity, and local folk belief asserts that she lures to her depths the young and the unwary, whom she drowns or devours. The foam or froth which gathers on the higher reaches of the river in great masses is known as "*Peg Powler's Suds*", while a thinner accumulation of this surface scum is known as "*Peg Powler's Cream*". Children were solemnly warned against disporting themselves on the banks of the Tees, as Peg would assuredly "*get*" them when they were off their guard.

Lewis Spence

Minor Traditions of British Mythology

This entry was posted in Folklore, River Tees. Bookmark the permalink.

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Police resort to 'bird bombs' to combat influx of crows in Sunnyside

20:19 EST, 5 December 2014 |
20:19 EST, 5 December 2014
dailymail.co.uk

They are scenes reminiscent of the 1963 Hitchcock classic film, The Birds.

Every night, around 10,000 crows descend on the small town of Sunnyside in Washington.

Now, police, citizens and local businesses are taking action against the booming influx of birds.

Merchants have deployed fake owls on rooftops and surrounding trees, homeowners have cut down tall trees around their houses and one bank even plays a recording of screeching hawks.

Scroll down for video

Influx: Every evening, around 10,000 crows descend on the small town of Sunnyside in Washington. Above, hundreds of the birds are pictured sitting on a tree in the town, which has a population of about 16,000

'Bird bombs': Police have resorted to using pyrotechnics (pictured) - dubbed 'bird bombs' - to scare off the crows, which cause health risks to the public from the thousands of droppings they litter across the town

Fleeing: Meanwhile, merchants have deployed fake owls on rooftops and surrounding trees and homeowners have cut down tall trees near their houses. Above, the crows flee the tree following the 'bird bombs'

Meanwhile, police have resorted to using pyrotechnics - dubbed 'bird bombs' - to scare off the crows, which pose a health risk from the thousands of droppings they litter across the town.

But despite their efforts, the birds continue to swoop over Sunnyside - which has a population of around 16,000 - on a nightly basis, according to King 5 in Seattle.

The crows, which are apparently attracted to the area because they can share food with the thousands of cows in nearby dairy farms, typically appear after 4.30pm.

In addition to dropping feces, they also create noise pollution, pose a risk to the town's electricity services by sitting on power lines and have even attacked residents during nesting season.

Reminiscent: The Sunnyside scenes are reminiscent of the 1963 Hitchcock classic film, The Birds (pictured)

health risk: The crows, which are apparently attracted to the area because they can share food with the thousands of cows in nearby dairy farms, typically appear after 4.30pm. Above,

some of their droppings

Town: In addition to dropping feces, they also create noise pollution, pose a risk to electricity services by sitting on power lines and have even attacked Sunnyside (file picture) residents during nesting season

Explaining the police's use of pyrotechnicas, Sunnyside Police Commander Scott Bailey told ABC News. 'Basically, it's a firework inside a pistol shell. We're simply trying to scare them off.'

Cmdr Bailey said the shells - often called 'bird bombs' - offer a non-lethal method to combat the population of crows, which has multiplied dramatically in the past five years.

'We're dealing with up to 10,000 crows every day,' he said, adding that citizens in the eastern town are warned before officers open fire and rarely complain about the noise.

Officer Samuel Ramos told Kima-TV: 'They create a mess. Obviously, it's a problem for the community. It's more humane to push them away than to obviously kill them.'

Humane: Officer Samuel Ramos (pictured) said the police's use of pyrotechnics was more beneficial to both the crows and the community, saying: 'It's more humane to push them away than to obviously kill them'

Non-lethal gun: Officer Ramos shows off a gun used to fire 'bird bombs' into the sky to scare off the crows

The department, which used to shoot dead the birds, is also hoping to establish a 'tree line' for the crows to gather at, away from the town, within the next five years, Cmdr Bailey said.

According to a previous study by the University of Cambridge in England, members of the crow family are among the cleverest birds - and are even smarter than most mammals.

Scientists said that, while having very different brain structures, both crows and primates use a combination of mental tools, including imagination, to solve similar problems.

This means crows can perform tasks that three and four-year-old children have difficulty with.

Intelligent bird: According to a previous study by the University of Cambridge in England, members of the crow family are among the cleverest birds - and are even smarter than most mammals (file picture)

It also means that harassment techniques are usually only effective for a short period of time.

In Alfred Hitchcock's The Birds, the California town of Bodega Bay suddenly becomes the subject of a series of widespread, unexplained and violent bird attacks.

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Polygamous man 'wants 50 children'

31 October 2014 bbc.com

Last updated at 09:15 ET

Two wedding bands

A Turkish man who has 32 children with four different wives has said he is aiming for 50, it's reported.

Polygamy is illegal in Turkey, but Halit Tekin has unofficially married three women since tying the knot with his first wife - legally - in 1982, the Hurriyet Daily News website reports. Mr Tekin, 54, who lives in Turkey's southern Hatay province, recently welcomed a baby boy named Ahmet with his first wife. "Today, I have 32 kids and 12 of them are boys. I love them all. If my health permits, God willing, I want to raise the number to 50," he says. The wives all live in different houses with their children "as we cannot fit in a single house", he says, adding that everyone gets along "quite well". Despite being outlawed, a 2013 study by Turkey's parliament found that 372,000 men practised polygamy in the country, the website reports.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan regularly called for families to have at least three children when he was prime minister, in order to keep the country strong. "One or two children mean bankruptcy... at least three children are necessary in each family, because our population risks ageing," he said in 2013.

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Pope declares support for exorcisms

mnn.com

Modern exorcists require specialized training to combat the psychological and spiritual dimensions of casting out demons.
Pope Francis recently expressed his approval of a group of exorcists meeting at the Vatican this week. While exorcisms, in which demonic spirits are driven out of a supposedly possessed person, may seem a dark practice relevant only on TV screens, they have long been recognized by the Catholic Church and several religions.

This week, more than 300 members of the International Association of Exorcists are attending the convention, which is focused on the impact of the occult and Satanism on people today, The Catholic Sun reported.

The IAE was founded in 1990 byFather Gabriele Amorth, exorcist for the diocese of Rome, and was formally recognized by the Vatican this past June. [Spooky! The Top 10 Unexplained Phenomena]

Priests who pursue the ministry of exorcism "manifest the Church's love and acceptance of those who suffer because of the devil's works," Pope Francis wrote in a message to the association's president, Father Francesco Bamonte, Breitbart reported this week. The Holy See's approval of the International Association of Exorcists was "cause for joy not only for the association, but for the whole Church," Bamonte said.

The belief that demons exist and can possess people features in many religions, including Christianity. Exorcisms date back to the time of Jesus, who according to the Bible, "cast out demons."

Exorcism is "a highly unusual ministry for a situation in the human condition, which is quite rare, but it's growing in frequency," said Father Dwight Longenecker, a parish priest at Our Lady the Rosary in Greenville, South Carolina, who is not an exorcist, but supports the practice.

"Exorcism is a little bit like brain surgery in the spiritual realm," Longenecker told LiveScience. Real exorcisms aren't quite as dramatic as Hollywood films such as "The Exorcist" would have you believe, but such movies do portray a version of events that actually happen, he said.

Signs that a person may be possessed, though never proven by science, include a great aversion to anything to do with the church, such as holy water or crucifixes; preternatural strength or knowledge; alien voices; and levitation or other paranormal phenomena, Longenecker said. Nevertheless, "we always look for natural explanations first," such as mental illness or addiction problems, he said.

Modern exorcists are normally experienced in both psychology and spiritual matters, and the job requires specialized training, said Longenecker, who writes a blog about the Catholic

faith, called "Standing on My Head."

Exorcisms have been known to be harmful in some cases, perhaps due to the involvement of untrained exorcists, as news reports have attested. In 2011, a Virginia man was convicted in the death of his 2-year-old daughter for beating her to death in an attempt to rid her of demons, according to news reports.

The practice of eradicating demons is not unique to the Catholic Church, but it does have a long history with Christianity.

"It's really at the heart of the Church's mission, and it goes back to Jesus himself," said Dan Lord, a writer and director of religious education at the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in Charleston, South Carolina.

Lord told LiveScience he is glad to see the International Association of Exorcists making progress, but this isn't the first time the Church has recognized the group's efforts.

"They had the support of Pope St. John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI, too, so the approval of the [IAE's] statutes is just the latest step in what has been a fairly steady process," Lord said.

Still, Lord said today's exorcists often feel "undervalued," or suppressed by Catholic priests and bishops who "have jumped on the same materialistic, rationalistic bandwagon as so many others in society," he said.

Follow Tanya Lewis on Twitter and Google+. Follow us @livescience, Facebook & Google+. Original article on LiveScience.

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Post-medieval Polish buried as potential 'vampires' were likely local

phys.org

- November 26, 2014

Individual 49/2012 (30-39 year old female) is shown with a sickle placed across the neck. Credit: Amy Scott

Post-medieval Polish buried as potential 'vampires' were likely local

Potential 'vampires' buried in northwestern Poland with sickles and rocks across their bodies were likely local and not immigrants to the region, according to a study published November 26, 2014 in the open-access journal *PLOS ONE* by Lesley Gregoricka from University of South Alabama and colleagues.

In northwestern Poland, apotropaic funerary rites—a traditional practice intended to prevent evil—occurred throughout the 17th-18th c. AD. Those of the dead considered at risk for becoming vampires for a variety of reasons were given specific treatment, and investigating these burial practices may provide insight into community cultural and social practices, as well as the social identities of people living in the area at the time. Excavations at a cemetery in northwestern Poland have revealed six unusual graves, with sickles across the bodies or large rocks under the chins of select individuals, amidst hundreds of normal burials. To better understand whether the bodies selected for apotropaic burial rites were local or non-local immigrants, the authors of this study tested permanent molars from 60 individuals, including 6 "special" or deviant burials, using radiogenic strontium isotope ratios from archaeological dental enamel. They then compared the results to strontium isotopes of local animals.

The authors found that those in deviant burials seem to be a predominantly local population, with all individuals buried as potential vampires exhibiting local strontium isotope ratios. These data indicate that those targeted for apotropaic practices were not likely migrants to the region, but instead, local individuals whose social identity or manner of death likely marked them with suspicion in some other way. The authors suggest one alternate explanation behind these apotropaic burials may be the cholera epidemics that were prevalent in Eastern Europe during the 17th century, as the first person to die from an infectious disease outbreak was presumed more likely to return from the dead as a vampire. "People of the post-medieval period did not understand how disease was spread, and rather than a scientific explanation for these epidemics, cholera and the deaths that resulted from it were explained by the supernatural - in this case, vampires," said Dr. Gregoricka.

Individual 60/2010 (45-49 year old female) is shown with a stone placed directly on top of the

Post-medieval Polish buried as potential 'vampires' were likely local

throat. Credit: Gregoricka et al.

Explore further: Native American city on the Mississippi was America's first 'melting pot'

More information: Gregoricka LA, Betsinger TK, Scott AB, Polcyn M (2014) Apotropaic Practices and the Undead: A Biogeochemical Assessment of Deviant Burials in Post-Medieval Poland. *PLoS ONE* 9(11):e113564. DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0113564

Journal reference: PLoS ONE Provided by Public Library of Science

Chinese city burns money for power

10 December 2014 bbc.com

Last updated at 10:17 ET

A person's hand on piles of 100-yuan notes

A company in one Chinese city has money to burn, and is using it to make electricity, it's reported.

The power plant in Luoyang, central Henan Province, is burning old and damaged banknotes instead of coal - the first time this has been done in China, the official Xinhua news agency reports. The plant says one tonne of notes can generate more than 600 kWh of electricity, and is better for the environment than burning coal. The country's central bank, the People's Bank of China, has given permission for the notes to be burned, and says it's an efficient way to make electricity. With the province's unused paper money the company "can help generate 1.32 million kWh of electricity annually, which is equal to burning 4,000 tonnes of coal", a member of staff at the bank tells Xinhua.

Banknotes which are withdrawn from circulation in China after being worn out by handling or other damage are most commonly used to make paper products, according to the Dahe Daily news website. The idea of setting fire to the city's cash has amused Chinese social media users. "Burning money? Luoyang is such a rich city!" says one Weibo user, while another person writes: "I'm willing to go a year without electricity, please give me a pile of cash!" But one user has a craftier suggestion: "Hire me as an employee, I promise I won't take any money."

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On Thursday April 3, 1817, a strange woman appeared in Almondsbury, a small town near Bristol in Gloucestershire, England. She was five foot two, extremely attractive, and wore a black shawl twisted turban-style around her head. She spoke no known language and so had to communicate with the people of the town through gestures. Because she appeared to have been wandering the countryside alone, either lost or destitute, she was sent to see the Overseer of the Poor, who, in turn, sent her to Knole Park, home of Samuel Worrall, the Magistrate of the County.

Princess Caraboo, by Edward Bird

It was a dangerous time in England to be a homeless foreigner wandering the countryside. The British had recently defeated Napoleon and sent him into exile on the island of St. Helena, but the British authorities were still worried that foreign agents might be present in the country gathering information or trying to foment revolt. Anyone found guilty of disturbing the peace was in danger of being shipped to Australia or even executed.

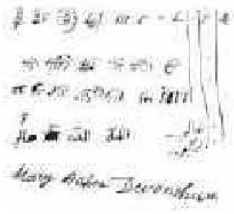
Princess Caraboo, by Thomas Barker

When the Worralls met the woman, however, they found her less disturbing than intriguing. Mrs. Worrall, in particular, was fascinated by her. The woman's language was like nothing she had ever heard. The woman's hands were soft, not those of a laborer, and when the woman noticed a picture of a pineapple hanging on a wall, she pointed at it excitedly, as if recognizing it from her homeland. She exhibited other strange behavior, such as refusing to drink out of a glass until she had washed it herself. What puzzled Mrs. Worrall, however, was that although by her language and behavior the woman seemed to be from some exotic, faraway corner of the world, the woman's features were definitely European. Mrs. Worrall wondered if the woman was Spanish, Greek, or even a Gypsy.

Despite Mr. Worrall's misgivings, the woman soon came to live at Knole Park while Mrs. Worrall tried to solve the mystery of her origin. Clues began to emerge. First the Worralls learned that the woman's name was Caraboo. Or, at least, the woman would frequently say the word 'Caraboo' while pointing at herself. Then a Portuguese sailor appeared who claimed to be able to speak her language. Translating for the woman, the sailor explained that she was a princess in her own land, the island of Javasu. She had been abducted from her island home by sailors and, after a long and arduous journey, had escaped from her captors by jumping overboard in the English Channel and swimming to shore.

View of Knole Park in Gloucestershire, where Princess Caraboo lived for many weeks.

When the Worralls learned that Caraboo was actually foreign royalty, they immediately announced her presence at their house to the newspapers, and soon all of England knew about Princess Caraboo. For a few weeks the Princess lived in a grand style, spending her days dancing, fencing, climbing trees, praying to her god 'Alla Tallah,' entertaining the numerous visitors who came to see her, and swimming naked in the lake when she was alone (this last behavior gained her enormous notoriety). The Worralls, meanwhile, basked in the reflected glory.



Characters drawn by Princess Caraboo. Also shown is the autograph of Mary Baker.

However, the party came to an abrupt end when a woman called Mrs. Neale recognized a description of Caraboo printed in the Bath Chronicle. She revealed that Caraboo had recently been employed as a servant at her house, where she had entertained the children by speaking a strange, nonsense language of her own creation, and that her true name was Mary Baker, daughter of a cobbler in Witheridge, Devonshire. Caraboo reluctantly admitted that she was a fraud.

It's not entirely clear why Mary Baker chose to assume the identity of Princess Caraboo. Those who knew her as Mary Baker later explained that she had always demonstrated rather theatrical behavior, seeming to prefer to live in her own world of make-believe fantasy rather than in the real world. Apparently she had noticed that by posing as an exotic foreigner she could more easily elicit sympathy and help while travelling on the road (see the Native of Formosa, 1703), and so began her imposture.

However she came to create the character of Princess Caraboo, her deception was powerfully aided by the desire of people to believe that the character was real. As Princess Caraboo, she appealed to the aesthetic of Romanticism that was emerging in Europe (expressed through the work of artists such as Byron, Keats, and Shelley). The British felt that she looked and acted how, according to their romanticized image of the Orient, an exotic foreign princess should look and act. She was mysterious and beautiful, and they desperately wanted to believe that the fantasy she presented them with was real.

Frontispiece to *Caraboo: A Narrative of a Singular Imposition*, showing her in the costume she was wearing when she first appeared in Almondsbury.

Once her imposture was revealed, she also came to symbolize a cultural shift that was far more powerful: the crumbling of the power of the English aristocracy. Napoleon was the most powerful symbol of the challenge faced by European aristocracies, but like Napoleon, Princess Caraboo was a representative of the lower classes who, through her talents alone, had successfully challenged the upper classes and won, at least temporarily. The British press gleefully repeated how she had pulled the wool over the eyes of the upper classes by appealing to their own vanity and greed.

Mary Baker's natural charm, which aided her so much in her portrayal of Princess Caraboo, continued to sustain her after her unmasking. Mrs. Worrall took sympathy on her and not only forgave her for the deception, but offered her enough money to allow her to sail to Philadelphia. A few weeks after her departure, a British reporter wrote a story claiming that while sailing to America, Princess Caraboo's boat was blown off course and drifted near St. Helena, where Napoleon was exiled. Supposedly Princess Caraboo rowed out to meet Napoleon, who was immediately captivated by her charms. The former Emperor begged her to marry him, but she refused. The story was intended to be a joke, but the pairing of Napoleon and Caraboo proved so appealing that many of the accounts of Caraboo which have appeared since 1817 have reported the story as fact.

Princess Caraboo's fame preceded her to America, and upon her landing she was besieged by curiosity seekers. After seven years she tired of America and returned to England where she occasionally responded to the continuing interest in Caraboo by giving public performances dressed as the Princess, but as the popular memory of her story faded, she made a living instead by selling leeches to the Infirmary Hospital in Bristol. As odd as this profession sounds to people today, it was considered entirely respectable in the 19th century and earned her an above average income. She died on January 4, 1865 and was buried in an unmarked grave in the Hebron Road cemetery in Bristol.

Links and References

- Gutch, J.M. Caraboo: A Narrative of a Singular Imposition Practiced Upon the Benevolence of a Lady Residing in the Vicinity of Bristol. 1817.
- Raison, Jennifer and Goldie, Michael. The Servant Girl Princess Caraboo: The Real Story of the Grand Hoax. Interlink Books. 1995.
- Sutcliffe, Jennifer. "Caraboo: Itinerant Servant-girl and Impostor," in Bridgeman, Harriet and Drury, Elizabeth (eds.). The British Eccentric. Michael Joseph Ltd. 1975.
- Wells, John. Princess Caraboo: Her True Story. Pan Books. London. 1994.

Comments

Dear Mr. Boese,

I came across your web-site tonight while checking for other sites including "Caraboo." For your reference, I have produced a hypertext edition of Gutch's

"Caraboo" at my web-site, at: http://www.resologist.net/carabooa.htm

I shall have to spend some more time going over many of the hoaxes covered by your site. I would recommend one item, which may be a hoax and which is associated with many hoaxes

in its solution, for inclusion in your list: the "Grave Creek Stone." There is a fairly good review with illustrations, at: http://www.econ.ohio-state.edu/jhm/arch/grvcrk.html

There are a number of other hoaxes mentioned by Charles Hoy Fort, in "Lo!" Some of my favourites are Sir Flinders Petrie's discrediting of Dr. Hubert Grimme's deciphering of the story of Moses, from an inscribed stone found at a temple in Sinai, and the archaeological discoveries at Glozel, France. These are to be found in part 1, chapter 15, at: http://www.resologist.net/lo115.htm
Posted by Mr. X on Mon Sep 25, 2000 at 09:23 PM

Dear Mr. Boese,

I'm enjoying your book and thought I'd drop you a line regarding the hoax of Mary Baker (Princess Caraboo).

I'm sure it is pure coincidence, especially since the Princess Caraboo hoax was confessed to, but the word for her God, "Alla Tallah", is in fact an Arabic phrase used by Muslims quite often. It means "God Most High". Kinda makes ya wonder...
grin Posted by Najiyah on Thu Feb 20, 2003 at 09:07 PM

Dear Alex,
I found your site today while searching for information about Princess Caraboo. The reason for this, is that Princess Caraboo's grave is in danger of being buried under tarmac. You state that her grave is unknown. This is not the case. It is situated in a tiny cemetery on Hebron Road, in Bedminster, Bristol. The Victorian chapel that it belongs to is now a buisness center, and planning permission is being sought to turn this little graveyard into a carpark.
Posted by Esma on Thu Jun 26, 2003 at 07:08 AM

The Princess Caraboo story is a wonderful tale. I came across it 15 yers ago, some years after I moved to the village of Almondsbury near Bristol where the whole thing 'happened'. I am a writer and wrote a screenplay for the BBC on the subject, followed by a stage play in 1990 and some years ago a Radio play for BBC Radio 4 which is still on the BBC Web site. I am currently discussing writing a community play for the Devon village of Witheridge, Mary Baker' (Caraboo) birthplace. Incidentally, the late John Wells, who wrote the Caraboo movie and the book quoted in your newsgroup, and I met up while he was filming his story, and talked about Caraboo like she was a shared old friend. The more people who know the story the better.
Posted by Roger Stennett in Almondsbury, Bristol on Tue Jul 29, 2003 at 01:04 AM

Was she abducted? If so, how and when?
Posted by Loren Barboza in Kingburg on Thu Nov 07, 2013 at 06:55 PM

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Prospective buyer finds dead body in closet during showing of house

kansascity.com

11/21/2014 8:13 AM

MILWAUKEE – Saturday started out strange enough when Milwaukee-area real estate agent Jack Alves and two prospective buyers found live kittens in the trash cart behind one of the houses they were touring.

Then it got much worse.

As they walked through a different house shortly after noon, this one a vacant city foreclosure on the corner of 25th and Michigan streets, Phil Gustafson looked in a first-floor closet and quickly ran from the room.

“There’s a dude in there!” he told his friend, Keith Frank Jr., who had joined him in searching for a fixer-upper to buy.

Alves stepped toward the closet, announcing who he was and that he was showing the house. The man did not move.

“I didn’t touch him,” Alves said.

He called 911 and soon the house was buzzing with paramedics and police officers. They knew what this was.

The man was dead.

“He was facing the inside of the closet, laying on his side, his back to the door. I could not see his face. He was covered with a blanket or a coat partially,” Alves said.

The weather was cold on Saturday, and Frank remembers it seemed even colder inside the unheated house. The bizarre find added to the chill.

“Needless to say, we’re not very interested in that property anymore,” Frank said.

The four-family structure had been carved into a rooming house maze. Thieves had stolen the sinks and pipes, holes were smashed in the walls and ceilings, and paint is peeling off in sheets. It’s going for the price of a used car, $15,000, though the city estimates it would cost at least $109,000 to make it livable.

Milwaukee has more than 1,000 of these foreclosed houses to sell. Buyers were found for more than 380 homes this year, but others keep popping up as owners stop paying the taxes and walk away. This particular property, built in 1905, was taken by the city in 2012.

John Ernest Abbott looked at this old place and he saw home, at least for the night. His address, as listed on the morgue report, was “Homeless in Milwaukee.”

His identity was learned from his fingerprints. The report says it's unclear when Abbott was last known to be alive.

Somehow Abbott broke into the house, possibly by removing a board over a window, but there was no evidence he had been there long.

He curled up in the closet to sleep and never woke up. His body measured just 22 degrees, matching the temperature in the house. There was no sign of trauma.

Abbott was 53, and had suffered from mental illness, in particular schizophrenia, for at least 30 of those years, according to court records and a statement his brother, Ronald Abbott of Milwaukee, gave to the medical examiner.

He said he has been looking for his brother for years. He said Abbott had never married but had a daughter whose whereabouts are unknown. However, in conversations with psychologists trying to determine his mental competency for trial, Abbott said he never had children.

It was another act of trespassing that landed him in court in that case. He pleaded guilty to breaking into a house in Franklin a year ago this week. He was looking for a place to sleep and seemed incensed that he was prosecuted. "It's not murder, it's homelessness," he told one psychologist.

He spent parts of this year in jail and at Mendota Mental Health Institute. On the day of his sentencing, Sept. 23, it was determined he had already served enough time, and he was freed. It was back to the streets for him.

He said he sometimes sought shelter under bridges. With an eighth-grade education and almost no work record, he lived on a Social Security disability check. He had just $2.57 in his pocket when he died. A voice in his head sometimes told him to harm others or himself, perhaps by jumping in front of a speeding car or train.

One of the competency reports said this, "He said that he spent his time panhandling, socializing with persons met on the street, smoking marijuana and drinking alcohol. He identified that he enjoyed the freedom associated with street life."

The Milwaukee Rescue Mission, located a walk away from where Abbott died, does not turn away anyone when the weather turns this cold, except for dangerously violent people. Abbott could have slept at the shelter and been warm. He had stayed there on and off since 2008, but not since March 5 of last year.

An autopsy was done, but the exact cause of Abbott's death is yet to be known. He had reported having a clogged artery in his heart, chest pains and trouble breathing. He was treated on various occasions at the Milwaukee County Mental Health Complex.

Upon release, he would stop taking the antipsychotic medications that could help him. The reason he shared with a psychologist might surprise you: "I'm so lonely, and sometimes the voices make me feel not as alone."

This weekend, Alves expects to be back out there showing houses to Gustafson and Frank. They will open closets with apprehension.

“I’m probably going to be a little more cautious,” Alves said. “I have been in some of these houses in the dark with these guys, and I’m probably not going to do that.”

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Putin's tiger the main suspect in mystery China goat deaths: Xinhua

yahoo.com

BEIJING (Reuters) - A Siberian tiger released into the wild by Russian President Vladimir Putin is the main suspect in a series of goat deaths in China's northeast, state media reported Chinese local authorities as saying on Tuesday.

Siberian tiger experts have pegged Ustin, one of three tigers freed by Putin, as the killer of two goats, the official Xinhua news agency said.

Three goats are still missing.

According to a Xinhua witness, the dead goats' skulls had been crushed with puncture holes "the size of a human finger clearly visible".

Ustin crossed into China in October with another of Putin's tigers, both of which carry tracking devices, Xinhua said, adding a warning from a wildlife protection expert not to throw food at the tiger if spotted.

(Reporting by Paul Carsten; Editing by Nick Macfie)

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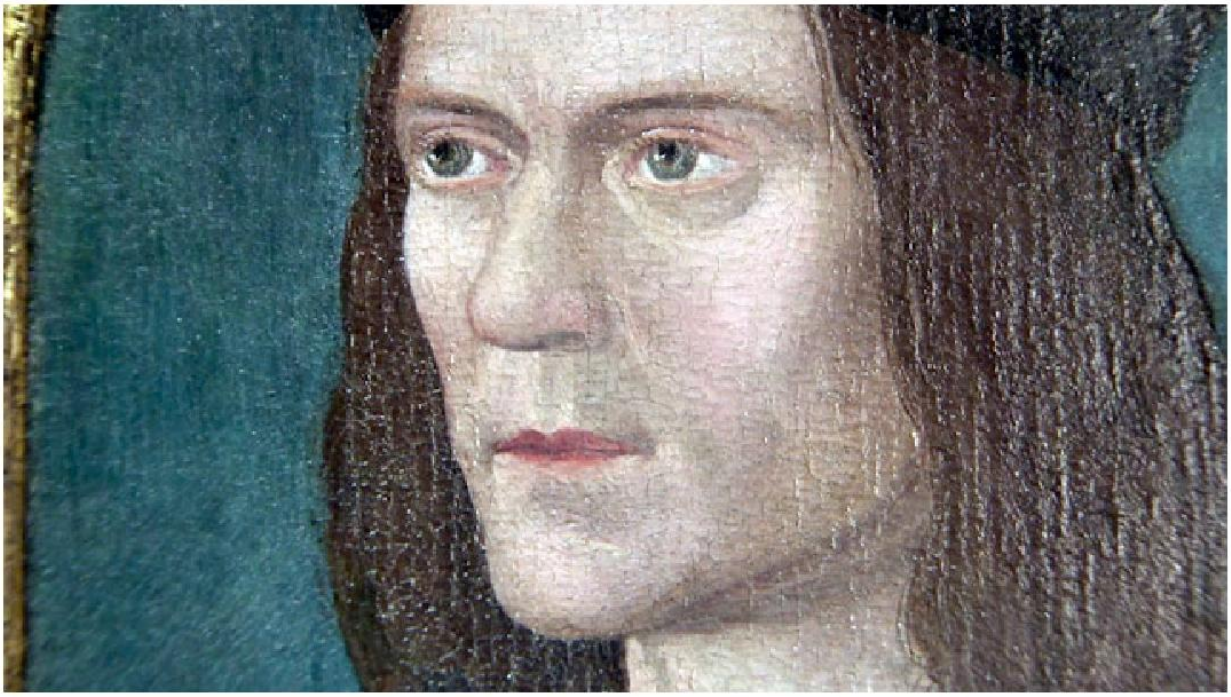
Questions raised over Queen's ancestry after DNA test on Richard III's cousins

Maev Kennedy
Tuesday 2 December 2014
theguardian.com

Tests on descendants of last Plantagenet king point to 'false paternity event' and reveal he may have been blue-eyed blond



The bones of the king under the car park have delivered further shocks, 527 years after his death and more than two years after his remains were discovered in Leicester: Richard III was a blue-eyed blond, and the present Queen may not be descended from John of Gaunt and Edward III, the lineage on which the Tudor claim to the throne originated.

Five anonymous living donors, all members of the extended family of the present Duke of Beaufort, who claim descent from both the Plantagenets and Tudors through the children of John of Gaunt, gave DNA samples which should have matched Y chromosomes extracted from Richard's bones. But none did.

Since Richard's identity was proved by his mitochondrial DNA, handed down in an unbroken chain through the female line from his sister to two living relatives, the conclusion is stark: there is a break in the claimed line of Beaufort descent, what the scientists described as "a false paternity event", which may also affect the ancestry of their distant cousins, the Windsors.

The other main finding overturns the most famous images of Richard, including the portrait head reconstructed from his skull that shows him with dark eyes and shoulder length dark hair. The analysis of his DNA gives a 96% probability for blue eyes and a 77% likelihood that

he was blond at least in childhood.

There is no known contemporary portrait, but Turi King, the Leicester University geneticist who conducted the DNA research, said one in the collection of the Society of Antiquaries in London, made about 25 years after his death in 1485, showing grey-blue eyes and brown hair, probably comes closest to a true likeness.

Kevin Schürer, a genealogist and head of research at Leicester University, whose work with King on the ancestor is published this week in Nature Communications, said the results on the Y chromosomes, handed only from father to son, did not change history. "This is not a criminal investigation," he said, pointing out that the Tudors took the crown because they killed Richard at the Battle of Bosworth in 1485, not because they could prove the blood royal flowed through their veins.

However the Tudors did back up their claim to the throne through descent from John of Gaunt, son of Edward III and father of Henry IV – and ancestor of the Tudor dynasty through his legitimised Beaufort children after he married his mistress Katherine Swynford.

Although the Queen is descended from the Hanoverian kings, imported 300 years ago when the Stuart line failed with the death of the childless Queen Anne in 1714 and the Act of Settlement ensured that only Protestants could take the throne, the blood lines are entangled.

Mary Queen of Scots, mother of James I of England, was the cousin of Elizabeth I who executed her for treason, and both were descended from the first Tudor king, Henry VII. The Hanoverians were descended through marriage from the Stuarts through Sophia, granddaughter of James I and mother of George I.

Working out where the line from Edward III to the present Beaufort family was broken could only be done by exhuming a lot of bodies, Schürer explained – it took him 36 sheets of A4 paper taped together to demonstrate the family trees – and is not going to happen.

Nor will he be knocking on the door of Buckingham Palace looking for DNA samples. There are, however, at least two breaks in the line. The most significant would be if John of Gaunt were not the son of Edward III – which enemies suggested in his lifetime – which would affect the ancestry of the Tudors, Stuarts and Windsors, though Schürer suspects the break came later.

The five supposed cousins who gave their DNA are not descended from Edward III, or they would share Richard's Y chromosomes, but one of the five is also not descended from the man who should be their more recent common ancestor, the 18th-century Henry Somerset, fifth Duke of Beaufort. "We actually went to his home and sat him down," Schürer said. "It's not the sort of news you want to deliver by email." King said he had taken it surprisingly well: "It explained certain things in his family history."

There is nothing startling about such rates of illegitimacy Schürer said, the estimated false paternity rate in any generation is 1-2%. Many contemporaries believed Richard's brother Edward IV was illegitimate, and he declared illegitimate his nephews, the Princes in the

Tower, to justify seizing the throne.

Richard left no direct descendants: his son Edward died before him, and a possible illegitimate son and daughter died childless. However Schürer's research traced an unbroken line from Richard's sister Anne of York to two descendants, researcher Michael Ibsen and researcher Wendy Duldig, born in Canada and Australia, 14th cousins twice removed but both living and working in London. The swabs King took from them proved a perfect match between Richard and Ibsen and a near perfect for Duldig – the oldest such successful identification.

They also looked at the possibility that the grave found in August 2012 held another man from the same date, of the right age, with battle injuries and scoliosis, and the same mitochondrial DNA. "What we have concluded is that there is, at its most conservative, a 99.999% probability that these are indeed the remains of Richard III", King said.

Case closed, they agreed – though work continues on the DNA to extract more information about the last Plantagenet king.

The continuing research is mainly funded by the University of Leicester, with King's post part funded by the Wellcome Trust and the Leverhulme Trust.

The skeleton found underneath a car park in Leicester in September 2012, which has been declared 'beyond reasonable doubt' to be that of King Richard III

• This article was amended on 3 December 2014. An earlier version referred to Richard III's son as Richard, rather than Edward.

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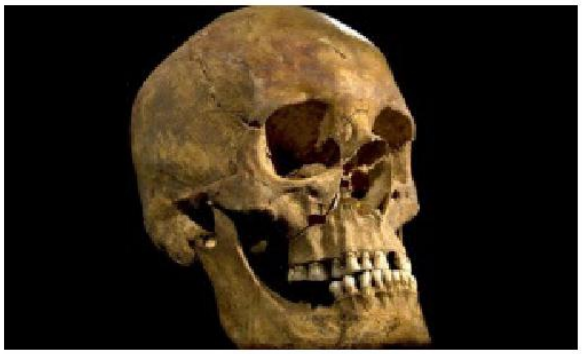
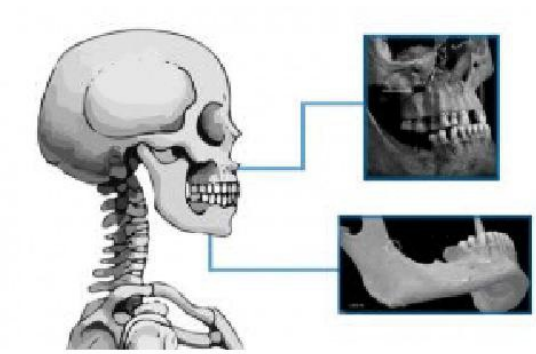
View all comments >

• TrasdentBacal

Depressing to see that not just biologists and psychologists but





also genealogists and historians can be so inaccurate in their pursuit for fame-for-a-day

in the The Guardian. It could actually be that their real research had been rigorous enough, yet, whenever they "leak" data to the frivolous medium to which certain papers belong it all become more sensational and slanderous than true.

I don't care much about Queen Elizabeth's legitimacy as I care about the legitimacy of so-called scientific research and its posterior divulgation into main stream media. The "leak" goes on and on to the point that when you read subsequent articles referring to this Guardian article the story become further altered to make it a claim of illegitimacy of the current British Royal house. And in that sense this article and, perhaps, also the original genealogical paper in the discussion section has a problem of inaccuracy in both the genealogical speculation (without revealing possible "hidden" data backing it) and in the formulation of conclusions and pretentious suppositions.

Yes, you can claim that the founded remains are those belonging to King Richard III. Plausibly. You can also claim that the mitochondrial DNA identity of claimed descendants from the king's sister is a quite reliable evidence of highly probable family relationship between Richard and his sister's descendants. But I don't see why Richards Y-chromosome is taken as the model of the true Plantagenet Y-hallmark which the Beauforts could not match. That the Beauforts are farther removed by generations from Eduard III than Richard is no definitive proof of neither Richard's supposed Plantagenet legitimacy nor the have-to-be-embarrassing speculated illegitimacy of the Beauforts. Furthermore, I would say that illegitimacy (birth outside wedlock) made bastards (at least equally) good candidates for true biological children in those times of the Middle Ages where people probably were less able to control adultery within (royal) marriage.

Finally, Queen Elizabeth has nothing to fear about the Beaufort claim used by Henry VII Tudor in his becoming king, although the force used in the process should not be celebrated. You guys missed a key point, namely, Elizabeth of York, queen and wife of Henry. Due to that marriage (of the two roses), all British monarchs from Henry VIII to Elizabeth II can only be suspected (unless the opposite is demonstrated) to descend from her, and she was the rightful heiress of Richard III and the last Plantagenets, Y-chromosome regular or not. Unless you now have enough "hidden" evidence that Eduard IV in fact was a bastard or that it should matter that Elizabeth Woodvile was just a mere royal concubine with a powerful witch mother, I see no problem for the British crown. It belongs to Elizabeth so far and so long you don't do any better your research work!

- Elizabeth Sylvester-Gray

As the King of Siam said "Tis a puzzlement" (as in the film of course)

- Pragmatism

The raison d'être of the royal family is whittling down toward nothing.

First, there was the Divine Right of Kings. Given that the Divine is rejected, or at least doubted, by most people this claim has little merit.

Second, genetic evidence suggests that justification for continuation of royalty because it is a bloodline is at best moot. In any case the notion of "royal blood" (particularly that virtue resides in it) is not in tune with modern understanding.

Third, habit, known as custom and practice, is no solid ground for continuing an anachronistic institution. Royalty has long since passed its "sell by date" and is lingering after "its use by date". Let it be hoped that ascension to the throne by Charles Windsor will convince doubters that the product is unsavoury.

There remains but one solid basis for extending the contract of the royals: Tony Blair. The widely prevalent objection to a republic is that Tony Blair would become President (substitute any other name from the current noxious brew of politicians should you wish - President Wee Willy Hague?)

Yet, *that* view is based on misapprehension over how the head of state role must be served in a republic. In all but name, the PM is head of state during his political interactions with the leaders of other nations; the monarch serves a social role as hostess to visiting heads of state.

Thus, what is left is the monarch's (largely unwritten) constitutional role. This means that in times of stress the monarch may intervene using residual powers. The most likely circumstance is when no political party has a Commons majority and the parties are unable to form a coalition.

That role (and other relevant residual powers) may be undertaken by our Supreme Court within stipulations of a written constitution. Officers of the state (MPs, police, army, etc.) would take an oath to uphold the constitution and protect the "rights" of citizens (no longer demeaning subjects).

- giveusaclue

These two graphs will make it all as clear as mud for those interested!

http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/interactive-graphics/11269889/Richard-III-graphic-royal-family-tree.html

http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/theroyalfamily/11268218/Richard-III-DNA-shows-British-Royal-family-may-not-have-royal-bloodline.html

- mps502

"Since Richard's identity was proved by his mitochondrial DNA, handed down in an unbroken chain through the female line from his sister to two living relatives, the conclusion is stark: there is a break in the claimed line of Beaufort descent, what the scientists described as "a false paternity event", which may also affect the ancestry of their distant cousins, the Windsors." The mitochondrial DNA proves that Richard was related to his sister. It doesn't prove that he and his sister weren't the result of a 'false paternity event'. If you read the paper, you will see the conclusions are that the break

could have been in the descent of *either* John of Gaunt *or* Edmund of Langley (both sons of Edward III).

There's good reason to suppose that Richard's paternal grandfather, Richard Earl of Cambridge, was illegitimate - the son not of Edmund of Langley, Duke of York, but of John Holland, Duke of Exeter (Richard II's maternal half-brother), with whom Cambridge's mother had a notorious affair. That would seem the obvious answer to where the stray Y-Chromosome came from - it's Richard who carries the interloper, not the Beauforts. It wouldn't affect Richard's claim to the throne if so, as that derived not from Edmund of Langley but from Edward III's 2nd son Lionel of Clarence, whose great-grand-daughter Anne Mortimer married Cambridge.

- Andrew Parry

It's irrelevant because the Queen is also descended through Edward III's son Edmund, Duke of York. He was the great-great grandfather of Elizabeth of York who married Henry VII; their daughter Margaret married James IV Scotland and the succession then continues through the Stuart line. The Queen isn't really descended from the Tudors anyway. Sorry , history bore here.

    - Composing Andrew Parry

    Elizabeth of York was the elder sister of the Princes in the Tower, King Edward V of England and Richard of Shrewsbury, Duke of York.

    So for the Windsors to claim lineage through Elizabeth of York we have to assume that the Princes in the Tower were actually murdered, or at least did not have legitimate issue.

    - Leslie Kenyon Andrew Parry

    Finally, someone who knows history!!!!!

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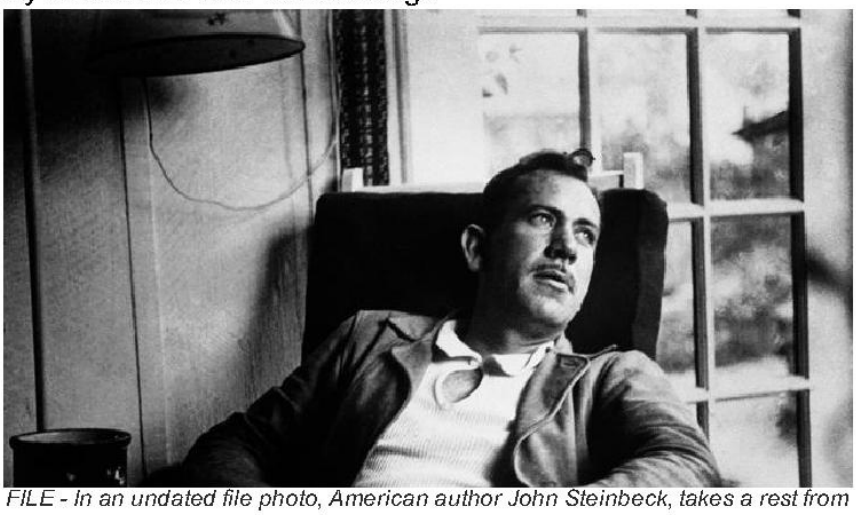
Rare Steinbeck WWII story finally published

yahoo.com

By HILLEL ITALIE 13 hours ago



FILE - In an undated file photo, American author John Steinbeck, takes a rest from work on a new novel. A rare Steinbeck WWII story titled "With Your Wings," an inspirational story about a black pilot that Steinbeck wrote for Orson Welles' radio program, and then seemed to disappear, is getting a second release. Andrew F. Gulli, managing editor of the Birmingham, Michigan-based quarterly The Strand Magazine, features it in The Strand's holiday issue, which comes out Friday, Nov. 7, 2014. (AP Photo. File)

FILE - In an undated file photo, American author John Steinbeck, takes a rest from work on a new novel. A rare Steinbeck WWII story titled "With Your Wings," an inspirational story about a black pilot that Steinbeck wrote for Orson Welles' radio program, and then seemed to disappear, is getting a second release. Andrew F. Gulli, managing editor of the Birmingham, Michigan-based quarterly The Strand Magazine, features it in The Strand's holiday issue, which comes out Friday, Nov. 7, 2014. (AP Photo. File)

NEW YORK (AP) — In July 1944, Orson Welles wrapped up one of his wartime radio broadcasts with a brief, emotional reading of one of the country's favorite authors, John Steinbeck.

The piece was titled "With Your Wings," an inspirational story about a black pilot that Steinbeck wrote for Welles' program, and it seemed to disappear almost as soon as it was aired. There are no records of "With Your Wings" appearing in book or magazine form. Even some Steinbeck experts, including scholar Susan Shillinglaw and antiquarian James Dourgarian, know little about it.

"It doesn't ring a bell at all," said Dourgarian, who specializes in selling first editions of Steinbeck's work. "And that's saying something if I haven't heard of it. It's also surprising because you would think that anything Steinbeck was involved with would be printed some place."

But 70 years after Welles' introduction in the midst of World War II, "With Your Wings" is getting a second release. Andrew F. Gulli, managing editor of the Birmingham, Michigan-based quarterly The Strand Magazine, came upon the transcript recently while looking through archives at the University of Texas at Austin. He features it in The Strand's holiday issue, which comes out Friday.

Steinbeck, who died in 1968, wrote often about social injustice and on occasion featured black characters, notably Crooks in his classic novella "Of Mice and Men." Gulli, whose

magazine specializes in reissuing obscure works by famous writers, said in a recent email that "With Your Wings" was characteristic of the Nobel laureate's worldview.

"Steinbeck was an idealist. He saw America as this wonderful land with so much to offer but on the flip side, he could see inequality, he could see greed and excess destroying the working classes," Gulli wrote. "This story strikes me as an effort to show middle America that African-Americans were carrying on a huge burden in defending the United States and the allies during the war."

An avid supporter of the war, Steinbeck worked overseas as a correspondent in the 1940s and, according to biographer Robert DeMott, wrote a favorable book about the Air Force called "Bombs Away!" Dourgarian noted that Steinbeck had favored "unusual" stories instead of describing the daily briefings from military officials.

"With Your Wings" at first reads like a standard narrative of a veteran's return, a plot used by everyone from Homer to Ernest Hemingway. Second Lieutenant William Thatcher has completed his training and at a farewell ceremony receives silver wings, pinned to his chest. He climbs into his "clattering" Model-A Ford and sets out for an unidentified hometown. He appears to be greeted as a hero, or at least a celebrity, passing "crowded porches" and children "washed and dressed in their best and starchiest clothes, hairs bursting with ribbons."

"He could hear the rustle as the neighbors moved silently near and formed a half circle behind him," Steinbeck writes. "It was as though his own people were sitting in judgment on him."

Thatcher's sense of obligation is made more clear and powerful when Steinbeck reveals that he is black, at a time the military was segregated.

"He took off his cap with the gold eagle on it and held it in his hand. He saw his tall father lick his lips. And then his father said softly, 'Son, every black man in the world is going to fly with your wings,'" Steinbeck writes.

"His heart was pounding. He could hear a little quiet murmur of voices in front of the house. He knew they were going to sing in a moment. And he knew now what he was to them."

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Real life vampire reported in Turkey

Published: 2013 February 15 10:30:03 (2369 Views)

Doctors in Turkey have described what they claim to be a real-life vampire with multiple personalities and an addiction to drinking blood.

The 23-year-old married man apparently started out slicing his own arms, chest and belly with razor blades, letting the blood drip into a cup so he could drink it.

But when he experienced compulsions to drink blood "as urgent as breathing," he started turning to other sources, the doctors said.

The man, whose name and hometown were not revealed in the report, was arrested several times after stabbing and biting others to collect and drink their blood.

He apparently even got his father to get him bags of the ghastly drink from blood banks, according to the report released today (Feb. 8) by the Journal of Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics.

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Real-life vampire drinks 2 litres of human blood a month

2014 November 29 09:47:13 zimkasi.com

Real-life vampire drinks 2 litres of human blood a month

Published: 2013 June 11 10:28:09 (3111 Views)

Mum-of-two Julia Caples is a real-life vampire - who drinks almost two litres of blood a month from willing human donors.

The 45-year-old has been sucking blood for over 30 years while bringing up her two children, Alexi, 11 and Ariel, 24.

Careworker Julia 'hunts' for willing 'donors,' fellow vampire fans willing to let Julia drink from them at her local occult and oddities store.

During drinking sessions at her Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania home, Julia carefully cuts them with a pagan like sterilised knife she designed herself.

She believes that guzzling down the the lifeblood from others keeps her feeling young and vigorous just like ageless vampires from cult movies.

"When I feed off of a person and drink their blood I feel stronger and healthier," she said.

Her fascination with blood began as a young girl, during her first kiss as a teenager, when she got the urge to bite her sweetheart with disastrous consequences.

"It was my natural instinct and I liked the taste, she said. "I just got an urge and can't really explain it. It's never gone away.

"Needless to say though, he never kissed me again."

She says she and goth friends did it occasionally through her teens, but it wasn't until Julia met ex-husband Donald, 49, that she started drinking regularly.

Counsellor Donald, who's still good friends with Julia and shares parenting duties, got married in a vampire themed wedding in October 2000 and even drank from each other to celebrate.

But when the pair had son Alexi, they decided something had to give and Donald vowed never to drink again.

"I gave up, so Julia didn't have to," he said. "We agreed that one of us would need to stop and focus on parenting full time.

HURL and NOAA team discover intact 'ghost ship' off Hawai'i

This is an archive image of the USS Kailua, 1943. Credit: Naval History and Heritage Command

Researchers from the University of Hawai'i (UH) and NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries today announced the discovery of an intact "ghost ship" in 2,000 feet of water nearly 20 miles off the coast of Oahu. Sitting upright, its solitary mast still standing and the ship's wheel still in place, the hulk of the former cable ship Dickenson, later the USS Kailua, was found on the seabed last year on a maritime heritage submersible mission with the UH Hawai'i Undersea Research Laboratory's (HURL) Terry Kerby and Drs. James Delgado and Hans Van Tilburg of the maritime heritage program in NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries.

"It is always a thrill when you are closing in on a large sonar target with the Pisces submersible and you don't know what big piece of history is going to come looming out of the dark," said Kerby, HURL submersible pilot. "One of our first views of the USS Kailua was the classic helms wheel on the fantail. The ship was surprisingly intact for a vessel that was sunk with a torpedo. The upper deck structures from the bow to the stern were well-preserved and showed no sign of torpedo damage."

Launched in Chester, Pennsylvania in early 1923 for the Commercial Pacific Cable Company, Dickenson was a vital part of a global network of submarine cable that carried telecommunications around the world. When the cable reached Hawai'i for the first time in 1901, it was a major step in establishing not only a key link in the network, but also in connecting the islands to the rest of the world with near-instant communication. Dickenson arrived in Hawai'i and started work in July of that year. Repairing cable and carrying supplies, Dickenson served the remote stations at Midway and Fanning Island from 1923 until 1941.

"From her interisland service to her role in Pacific communications and then World War II, Dickenson today is like a museum exhibit resting in the darkness, reminding us of these specific elements of Pacific history," said Van Tilburg.

The sunken USS Kailua is surprisingly intact, including the ship's wheel, for a vessel that was sunk with a torpedo. Credit: UH HURL/ NOAA

Dickenson was also famously chartered by Cable and Wireless Ltd., the British telecommunications company also operating in the Pacific, to evacuate company employees from Fanning Island, a destination well known to Dickenson's crew as they regularly steamed

HURL and NOAA team discover intact 'ghost ship' off Hawai'i

to provision and supply the C. & W. station there. With Britain at war with Germany and its Axis partners, it was feared the station would be a target, as the company's stations had also been targets for German raiders in World War I. Dickenson arrived at Pearl Harbor with the Fanning evacuees on the morning of December 7, 1941, sailing into a port at war. Some of the evacuees on Dickenson noticed a submarine following their ship, only to see it disappear as U.S. forces attacked the sub and drove it off.

The coming of war had implications for Midway, Dickenson's regular port-of-call, and Dickenson. The cable service from Midway out into the Pacific was soon inoperable, and remained so throughout the war. Midway's role as a hub in trans-Pacific communications was effectively over, and a new strategic role, which had been evident in U.S. desires from the beginning of American involvement with the atoll, now assumed prominence. The famous battle of Midway, off the atoll's shores in 1942 underscored that new role. Dickenson, now chartered by the U.S. Navy, entered service as USS Kailua (IX-71) to service cable and submarine nets in the South Pacific until it returned to Pearl Harbor at the end of the war. No longer needed by the Navy or the Commercial Cable Company, the former USS Kailua was sunk as a target by submarine torpedo fire on February 7, 1946. The exact location was not recorded, and the final resting place of the ship had remained a mystery.

"Seeing the ship come into view, we were all amazed at its level of preservation - and by the fact that everything was more or less in place. The identification of the wreck was easy, not only because of its unique form, but also because the Navy's identification number of IX-71 was still painted on the bow," said Delgado, director of the Maritime Heritage Program.

HURL and NOAA team discover intact 'ghost ship' off Hawai'i

This dislodged engine room telegraph lies off the starboard bow of the USS Kailua. Credit: UH HURL

Detailed analysis of sonar surveys of the sea floor off Oahu by Steve Price and Terry Kerby of HURL has found a number of significant, previously uncharted wrecks that remained unidentified until encountered by HURL's Pisces submersibles. These have included the Japanese midget submarine sunk in the opening hour of the attack on Pearl Harbor, and the massive aircraft carrier submarines I-400 and I-401.

The USS Kailua wreck is considered an historic site. "We plan to nominate the wreck to the National Register of Historic Places," noted Delgado. "This unique American ship, vital in its role in keeping global telecommunications open in the first part of the 20th century, is also linked to historically significant Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge, now part of Papahanaumokukea Marine National Monument in the National Marine Sanctuary System. Wrecks such as this remind us of special places in the ocean, like the monument, that connect all of us to them as refuges, sanctuaries and museums beneath the sea."

There are no plans for a return to the site or any recovery; the wreck owned by the U.S. Government and is protected as Federal Property.

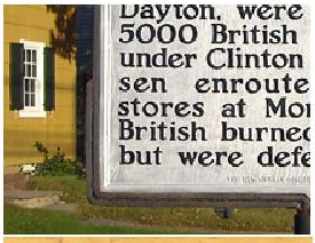
Explore further: NOAA team reveals forgotten ghost ships off Golden Gate

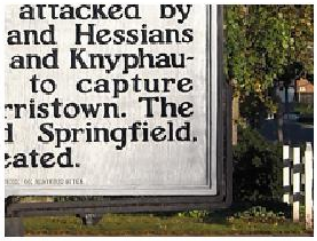
Provided by University of Hawaii at Manoa

CANNON BALL HOUSE
and
BATTLE OF SPRINGFIELD HISTORIC MARKER

Cannon Ball House

Springfield, New Jersey





Cannon Ball House

Springfield, New Jersey

Cannonball House
126 Morris Ave.
Map / Directions to the Cannonball House
Map / Directions to all Springfield Revolutionary War Sites

The Cannonball House is open for tours by appointment
and occasionally for events.
For information, contact 973-376-4784 or ms.bandrowski@yahoo.com.
www.springfieldhistoricalsociety.webs.com

The Battle of Springfield, June 23, 1780

In June of 1780, Washington and his army were encamped at Morristown, where they had been all through the brutal winter of 1779/1780. The winter had been the worst of the century. There were twenty-eight snowstorms, and temperatures were so continuously cold that, for

Springfield New Jersey - Revolutionary War

PRESBYTERIAN GATEWAY CEMETERY

Springfield, New Jersey

Presbyterian Gateway Cemetery

Springfield, New Jersey

Captain Eliakim Littell Gravesite

Revolutionary War Soldiers Cemetery

Revolutionary War Soldiers Cemetery

Presbyterian Gateway Cemetery
101 Taft Ln.
Map / Directions to the Presbyterian Gateway Cemetery
Map / Directions to all Springfield Revolutionary War Sites

The Presbyterian Gateway Cemetery is the burial place of Captain Eliakim Littell (1744 - 1805), who fought at the Battle of Springfield. His original gravestone is gone, but there is a monument to his memory. One side of the monument quotes the inscription from his original gravestone: "In defense of American Liberty he dared to oppose George the Tyrant of England, an enemy to the rights of mankind." **[16]**

Also buried here is Jonathan Dayton, a Revolutionary War veteran who died August 26,

1778. Dayton owned the house which was hit by a cannon ball in the Battle of Springfield. At the time of the Battle of Springfield, he had been dead for nearly two years, and his widow Keziah was living at the house. **[17]**

Source Notes:

1. ^ David M. Ludlum **Early American Winters 1604 - 1820 (Volume I)** (Boston: American Meteorological Society, 1966) p. 111 - 133
• This book contains a wealth of information about the weather for the winter of 1779-1780. Based on contemporary sources, it has day-by-day weather records for not only Morristown and New York City, but also New Haven, CT; Trappe, PA; and Westborough, MA. This book is long out of print, and it may be difficult to locate a copy. There are non-circulating reference copies of both volumes at the Morristown & Morris Township Library, which is where I located it.
• The book's author David M. Ludlum was a weather historian from New Jersey (born in East Orange, died in Princeton). For more information about Ludlum's life, see the interesting obituary which appeared for him in *The New York Times* when he died in 1997.

2. ^ Thomas Fleming, **The Forgotten Victory** (New York: Reader's Digest Press, distributed by E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc, 1973)
• Fleming's book was my main source of information for the Battle of Connecticut Farms and the Battle of Springfield. The book is recommended to those looking for an in-depth account of the battles.
• Fleming also created a condensed version of his book, which was published in 1974 as a booklet called ***The Battle of Springfield***. The booklet was number eight of a twenty-eight booklet series called *New Jersey's Revolutionary Experience*, published by the New Jersey Historical Commission to commemorate the Bicentennial. A PDF of ***The Battle of Springfield*** booklet is available on the New Jersey State Library website here.

3. ^ Information about the cannon ball from an information sheet with its display inside the house, and further discussed with the docents.

4. ^ Information about the history of the house and Jonathan and Keziah Dayton was drawn from the *Welcome to Cannon Ball House (Circa 1741) Springfield, NJ* pamphlet available at the Cannon Ball House.

5. ^ Thomas Fleming, **The Forgotten Victory** (New York: Reader's Digest Press, distributed by E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc, 1973) p. 239-264
• The time for the defense of the bridge is given in some accounts as 40 minutes. In Fleming's book, he writes on page 262 "for more than twenty-five minutes Colonel Angell and his men fought five times their number to a standstill." He then

goes on to describe the story about Reverend Caldwell (see source note # 1 below), before the Angell's troops falling back. So it appears that he is not stating that 25 minutes was the total time.

6. ^ The text of Washington's letter, as well as the full text of a resolve passed several days later by the Rhode Island General Assembly to honor Colonel Angell's regiment, can be found in:
Louise Lewis Lovell, **Israel Angell - Colonel of the 2nd Rhode Island Regiment** (The Knickerbocker Press, 1921) p. 168 -170
This book available to be read at the Internet Archive here
• In the book's source footnote, it states, "This letter as well as the Resolve given in the text, is from *Records of Rhode Island 9:147, 151*"

7. ^ *History of the First Congregation of the Presbyterian Church at Springfield* on the Springfield Presbyterian Church website

8. ^ More details about the events mentioned in this paragraph and accompanying source notes can be found in the entries linked in the text to the Caldwell, Elizabeth and Union pages of this website.

9. ^ Thomas Fleming, **The Forgotten Victory** (New York: Reader's Digest Press, distributed by E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc, 1973) 262-263
• In Fleming's source notes he lists Washington Irving, **Life of George Washington, Volume IV** (New York, 1857) as a source.
Fleming also explains, "[Irving's book] is the earliest reference I have been able to find for this story, which also is a strong oral tradition of the battle. Irving spent a good deal of time in New Jersey, and his biography of Washington was a serious historical effort. In 1857, there were still many men alive in New Jersey whose fathers had fought at Springfield. This convinces me that the story is substantially true."

Fleming's account in **The Forgotten Victory** adds details to that don't appear in Irving's one paragraph account, and so must have had other unlisted sources. Irving's short account can be read at Internet Archive here.

One specific detail is added by Fleming that I have left out of the entry above. Fleming specifies that the soldiers who called out for wadding were Colonel Angell's men who were defending the bridge, and that a messenger was sent into town who encountered Caldwell on horseback and told him of the need for wadding. This detail does not occur in some of the other accounts I read of the "Give 'em Watts" story, and do not occur in the Irving account that Fleming lists as his source. Because of my uncertainty about this detail, I chose to leave it out of the main entry, but mention it here in the source notes.

• Different accounts of the incident state that Watts said either "Give 'em Watts, boys," or "Put Watts into 'em boys" or both, or some variation of one or both. For example, Fleming quotes "Give 'em Watts, boys" and Irving quotes "Now, put

Watts into them, boys!" It would seem impossible to determine was his exact words were in the middle of the battle. "Give 'em Watts, boys" appears to be the most quoted version. It certainly sounds the catchiest to me.

10. ^ The poem *Caldwell of Springfield (New Jersey, 1780)* was written by poet and author Brett Harte (1836– 1902), and originally published in the *New York Tribune* on July 4, 1873.
Gary Scharnhorst, **Bret Harte: A Bibliography** (Lahham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 1995) p. 53 Available at Google Books here

The entire text of the poem follows. Note that Brett Harte takes some license with the details. For example, the poem makes it appear that Hannah Caldwell's death occurred on the same day as the Battle of Springfield. In fact, Hannah's death had occurred on June 7, 1780 at the Battle of Connecticut Farms; the Battle of Springfield occurred sixteen days later on June 23, 1780. Also the "Broke the door, stripped the pews" is a bit of poetic license.
~ Text of poem from **The Writings of Bret Harte, Volume VII** (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1904) p. 31 Available to be read at Google Books here

Caldwell of Springfield
(New Jersey, 1780)

HERE's the spot. Look around you. Above on the height
Lay the Hessians encamped. By that church on the right
Stood the gaunt Jersey farmers. And here ran a wall,—
You may dig anywhere and you 'll turn up a ball.
Nothing more. Grasses spring, waters run, flowers blow,
Pretty much as they did ninety-three years ago.

Nothing more, did I say? Stay one moment: you've heard
Of Caldwell, the parson, who once preached the Word
Down at Springfield? What, no? Come—that 's bad: why he had
All the Jerseys aflame! And they gave him the name
Of the "rebel high-priest." He stuck in their gorge,
For he loved the Lord God,—and he hated King George!

He had cause, you might say! When the Hessians that day
Marched up with Knyphausen they stopped on their way
At the "farms," where his wife, with a child in her arms,
Sat alone in the house. How it happened none knew
But God—and that one of the hireling crew
Who fired the shot! Enough!—there she lay,
And Caldwell, the chaplain, her husband, away!

Did he preach — did he pray? Think of him as you stand
By the old church to-day, — think of him and his band

Of militant ploughboys! See the smoke and the heat
Of that reckless advance, of that straggling retreat!
Keep the ghost of that wife, foully slain, in your view,—
And what could you, what should you, what would *you* do?

Why, just what *he* did! They were left in the lurch
For the want of more wadding. He ran to the church,
Broke the door, stripped the pews, and dashed out in the road
With his arms full of hymn-books, and threw down his load
At their feet! then above all the shouting and shots
Rang his voice,—"Put Watts into 'em,—Boys, give 'em Watts!"

And they did. That is all. Grasses spring, flowers blow,
Pretty much as they did ninety-three years ago.
You may dig anywhere and you'll turn up a ball,—

But not always a hero like this —and that 's all.

11. ^ More details about the events mentioned in this paragraph and accompanying source notes can be found in the entries linked in the text to the Westfield and Elizabeth pages of this website.

12. ^ Plaque states "Tribute of the New Jersey Society Sons of the American Revolution on the 150th Anniversary of the engagement, June 23, 1930."

13. ^ Names, dates, and rank information from gravestones and markers in the cemetery, and from a list posted inside the Cannon Ball House. Some cross-checking of this information was done with the D.A.R. Genealogical Research System database

14. ^ Monument erected by the New Jersey State Society of the Sons of the American Revolution - October 18, 1896.

15. ^ Names, dates, and rank information from gravestones and markers in the cemetery.

16. ^ Elakim Littell grave monument at the Presbyterian Gateway Cemetery

17. ^ *Welcome to Cannon Ball House (Circa 1741) Springfield, NJ* pamphlet available at the Cannon Ball House.

Website Researched, Written, Photographed and Designed by Al Frazza
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the only time in recorded history, the waters around New York City froze over and were closed to shipping for weeks at a time.**[1]** In the midst of these extreme weather conditions, the soldiers had to build their own huts and endure a serious shortage of food. The number of Washington's troops had dwindled, and the army's weapons and supplies were not sufficiently protected. The weather and lack of food over the winter has also cost the army most of their horses, which would hinder their ability to move their supplies to safety.

Two attempts were made in June 1780 by British and Hessian forces to invade New Jersey, attack Washington's troops at Morristown, and seize the vulnerable supplies. (Hessians troops were mercenary troops hired by the British to fight with them against the Americans in the Revolutionary War). Beginning with landing troops from Staten Island at Elizabethtown, they planned to move west through a gap in the Watchung Mountains with the intent to attack Washington at Morristown.

It can be hard for us living in the 21st century to visualize the importance of the Watchung Mountains during the Revolutionary War. Over two centuries of development and highway building have changed the visible landscape, and these changes allow us to easily drive over mountains which were once major obstacles to transportation and movement. For Washington's troops encamped at Morristown, the three ridges of the Watchung Mountains provided layers of protection that stretched for over 40 miles from Mahwah to Somerset County.

A gap in the Watchung Mountains known as Hobart Gap provided the one easy route to Washington's troops at Morristown. Hobart Gap was the last militarily defensible position between Elizabeth and Morristown; if the British troops could make it past Hobart Gap, they would have an easy path to Morristown to capture Washington's arms and supplies. Today, Route 24 passes through Hobart Gap in the Watchung Mountains, as does Morris Ave. in Springfield, and Millburn Ave. in Millburn. Modern development and work on the highway, including raising the elevation of this part of the highway with landfill, make it hard for our modern eyes to envision Hobart Gap as it was in the 1700's, but its legacy endures in the name of Hobart Gap Road in Summit, which passes over Rt 24.

The first attempt to invade and move through Hobart Gap began when British and Hessian troops landed at Elizabethtown on June 6, 1780. The following day, the invading forces made it as far as the village of Connecticut Farms (now Union Township), in what is known as the Battle of Connecticut Farms. Details about the the Battle of Connecticut Farms can be found on the Union page of this website.

Another attempt to invade New Jersey and attack Washington at Morristown was made on June 23, resulting in the Battle of Springfield. The attacking force consisted of 5000 British and Hessian troops under the command of British General Henry Clinton and Hessian General Wilhelm von Knyphausen. 1500 Continental troops under General Nathanael Greene and about 500 New Jersey Militia successfully defended against the attack and kept the invasion from reaching Hobart Gap and on to Washington's supplies at Morristown. However, despite the American victory, the battle brought great tragedy to the citizens of Springfield; when retreating, the British and Hessian forces burned most of the buildings in Springfield.

The Cannon Ball house was one of only four houses to survive unburned. After the Battles of Connecticut Farms and Springfield, British General Henry Clinton changed his strategy. No more attempts were made to invade New Jersey, and the Battle of Springfield became the last major battle fought in the North. The emphasis of the fighting shifted to the southern states, culminating in the decisive Battle of Yorktown sixteen months later on October 19, 1781. **[2]**

More details of the Battle of Springfield are described in the following entries.

The Cannon Ball House

This house is known as the Cannon Ball House because it was hit by a cannon ball during the Battle of Springfield. Interestingly, it was hit on the side of the house facing west, which means that it was struck by a ball fired from an American cannon firing at the invading forces. The ball itself lodged in the wall where it remained for almost a century and a half. In 1924, construction work was done on the house to build a cellar. In the process, the main part of the house had to be raised, and the cannon ball fell out. The original cannon ball is on display inside the house. A replica ball hangs on a chain on the side of the house to mark the site where the house was hit. **[3]**

The Cannon Ball House was built circa 1741. It was owned by a doctor named Jonathan Dayton, who was a Revolutionary War soldier. He died August 16, 1778, almost two years before the Battle of Springfield. (He is buried at the Presbyterian Gateway Cemetery - see entry below on this page.) His widow Keziah (*née* Miller) lived in the house after Jonathan's death, and she was here at the Battle of Springfield. Jonathan had a nephew, also named Jonathan Dayton, who was a signer of the Constitution. Springfield's Jonathan Dayton High School is named for the Jonathan who signed the Constitution. **[4]**

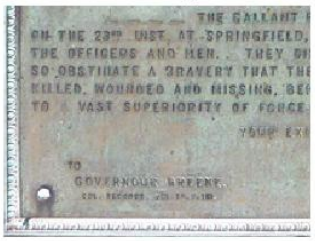
Union New Jersey in the Revolutionary War

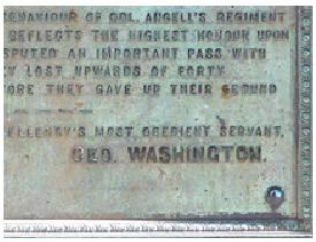
COLONEL ISRAEL ANGELL MEMORIAL

On Rahway Bridge

Israel Angell

Israel Angell





Colonel Israel Angell Memorial
Rahway Bridge
Morris Ave.
Map / Directions to the Colonel Israel Angell Memorial
Map / Directions to all Springfield NJ Revolutionary War Sites

A plaque on Rahway bridge is dedicated to Colonel Israel Angell. Angell commanded the 2nd Rhode Island Infantry, who were noted for their defense of a bridge at this location over the Rahway River during the Battle of Springfield. Angell and his men were the first line of defense for Springfield, and they held off the British advance at the bridge for more than a half hour before falling back into Springfield, despite being outnumbered five to one. **[5]**
A plaque on the modern bridge here pays tribute to Colonel Angell and his troops.

While the main attack into Springfield came over this bridge, the right column of British troops made an attempt to reach Springfield by Vauxhall road over a bridge over a different branch of the Rahway River, through what is now Millburn. Details about this part of the Battle of Springfield can be found on the Millburn page of this website.

After the Battle, General Washington wrote to Governor William Greene of Rhode Island to acknowledge the contributions of these Rhode Island soldiers, and their state in general: (Portions of the following text are quoted on the plaque) **[6]**

> *"The gallant behaviour of Colonel Angell's regiment on the 23d inst., at Springfield, reflects the highest honor upon the officers and men. They disputed an important pass with so obstinate a bravery that they lost upwards of forty in killed, wounded and missing, before they gave up their ground to a vast superiority of force.*
>
> *"The ready and ample manner in which your state has complied with the requisitions of the committee of co-operation, both as to men and supplies, entitles her to the thanks of the public, and affords the highest satisfaction to, sir,*
>
> *"Your Excellency's most obedient servant, GEO. WASHINGTON"*

If you walk down Washington Ave. along the river, about 150 feet from this bridge there is a boulder with a plaque paying tribute to "Those brave men of the Jersey Militia and Continental Army who fought at the Battle of Springfield."

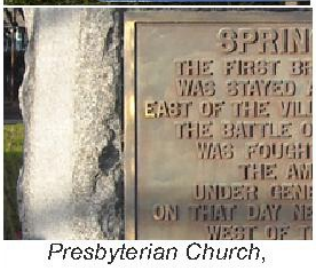
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
and
BATTLE OF SPRINGFIELD MONUMENT

Reverend James Caldwell - "Give 'em Watts, boys!"

Presbyterian Church

Springfield New Jersey

Presbyterian Church



Presbyterian Church,
Springfield NJ

Presbyterian Church
210 Morris Ave.
Map / Directions to Springfield Presbyterian Church
Map / Directions to all Springfield Revolutionary War Sites

An earlier Presbyterian church building at this site (built in 1761 or 1762) stood here at the time of the Revolutionary War, and was used as a storehouse. **[7]** That church building was burned by British and Hessian forces during the Battle of Springfield, along with most of the other buildings in the village. The current church was built to replace the one that was burned. An event during the battle involving the previous church building has become legendary, and it is one of the most notable New Jersey stories from the Revolutionary War. The story centers on the fascinating personality of Reverend James Caldwell.

Reverend James Caldwell had an interesting Revolutionary War history, and has connections to a number of historic sites throughout Union and Essex County. He was instrumental in forming the Presbyterian Church in Caldwell, and the town of Caldwell was named for

him. When the Revolutionary War began, he was devoted to the cause of Independence. Known as the "Fighting Chaplain," he served as both an army chaplain and assistant quartermaster general during the Revolutionary War. He was the pastor of the Presbyterian Church of Elizabethtown, and that church and his home were burned by British troops during a January 25, 1780 raid on Elizabethtown. With their home and church burned, James, his wife Hannah and their nine children moved to a parsonage in Connecticut Farms (now Union), and James preached at the church in Connecticut Farms. Sadly, his wife Hannah was killed when she was struck by a bullet fired by a British soldier on June 7, 1780, during of the Battle of Connecticut Farms. Just sixteen days later, James took part in the fighting at the Battle of Springfield. **[8]**

During the Battle of Springfield, some soldiers ran low on wadding for their muskets, and called out for more wadding. (When firing Revolutionary War era muskets, gunpowder was wrapped in paper. The paper was bit open, and the gunpowder poured in. The paper was then pushed into the musket for use as wadding, to steady the shot.) Reverend Caldwell was riding around the fighting area, encouraging the soldiers. On hearing about the need for wadding, Reverend Caldwell headed on his horse to the church and grabbed a stack of hymn-books written by the then well-known hymn-writer Isaac Watts. He rode back to the bridge, and as he threw the hymn books to the soldiers to use the pages for wadding, as he shouted, "Give 'em Watts, boys" and/or "Put Watts into 'em boys." **[9]**

Caldwell's shouts of "Give em Watts boys." became the most famous part of the story, and later the subject of a poem by Brette Harte. **[10]** However, what stands out most to me is the thought of just how personal this fight must have been to Caldwell. Within the previous half year, British troops had burned two of his houses and two churches he preached in. They had also killed his wife, leaving the Caldwell's children without a mother. One can only imagine his feelings that day as he encouraged the American soldiers to shoot British soldiers.

Unfortunately, the tragedies that had followed the Caldwell family throughout the war were not over. Just a year and a half after Hannah's death, James himself was killed by an American sentry in 1781, and their nine children were left orphaned. The sentry, James Morgan, was tried at the Westfield Presbyterian Church. He was found guilty and then hanged at a site known as Gallows Hill in Westfield. Both James and Hannah Caldwell are buried in the First Presbyterian Church Cemetery in Elizabeth. **[11]**

Springfield New Jersey - Revolutionary War

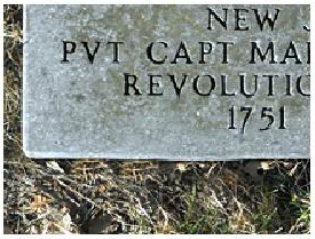
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH CEMETERY

Springfield, New Jersey

Springfield, New Jersey

Springfield, New Jersey

Springfield, New Jersey



Presbyterian Church Cemetery
Church Mall
Map / Directions to the Presbyterian Church Cemetery
Map / Directions to all Springfield Revolutionary War Sites

The Presbyterian Church's cemetery, located across Church Mall from the church, contains the graves of at least thirty-one Revolutionary War soldiers. A plaque at the gate pays tribute to "the heroic service performed at The Battle Of Springfield, during the war for American Independence by the soldiers whose remains are resting within this sacred tract." **[12]**

The Revolutionary War soldiers known to be buried here are: **[13]**

Samuel Allen
1751-1828
Private, Captain Martin's Co., 4th Battalion

Nathaniel Edwards
Died January 15, 1804

Thomas Gardner Jr.

Timothy Miller
Died February, 1788

Benjamin Morehouse
1752 - 1820
Private, Capt. J.

Samuel Bailey
Died April 28, 1815

David Ball
1756-1805
Private, New Jersey Militia

Uzal Ball
Died April 9, 1799, Aged 51

Henry Butterworth
Died January 2, 1821

Thomas Cooper
1745-1811
Somerset County Troops

Isaac Denman
Died October 29, 1791

Matthias Denman
Jan. 22, 1841

Phillip Denman
1749-1825
Private, Essex County NJ Militia

Stephan Denman
Died October 9, 1824

Aaron Edwards
Died September 15, 1804

1752-1804
Private, Pike's Company 2 US Levies

William Gardner
1769-1808
Private, 2nd Regiment NJ Infantry

Isaac Halsey
Died April 26, 1820

Joseph Halsey
1730-1813
Sgt., Morris County Eastern Battalion, NJ Militia

Aaron Hand
February 23, 1764-July 27, 1842
Private, Morris County Troops

David Hand
Died February 11, 1832

Elijah Lyon
1764-1828
Private, New Jersey Militia

Benjamin Meeker
1746-1813
Essex County Troops

John Meeker
Died October 12, 1800

Pierson's Co.,
2nd Regt., NJ Militia

Isaac Reeve
1745-1785
Captain, NJ Militia

Benjamin Scudder
June 6, 1733 - February 18, 1822
Essex Militia

Walter Smith
Died October 14, 1820, Aged 86

Thomas Taylor
Died November 2, 1784

Joseph Tucker
Died February 25, 1825, Aged 78

Daniel Vreeland
1757-1828
Private, NJ Militia

Caleb Woodruff
1755-1834
Private, NJ Militia

Stephen Woodruff
Died March 29, 1789, Aged 57

Springfield New Jersey - Revolutionary War

BATTLE GROUND CEMETERY

Springfield, New Jersey

Springfield, New Jersey

Revolutionary War Soldiers Cemetery

Springfield, New Jersey Revolutionary War Sites

Battle Ground Cemetery
Owned by the Church & Cannon Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution
39 Mountain Ave. / Up a short set of stairs from street level
Map / Directions to this Cemetery
Map / Directions to all Springfield Revolutionary War Sites

A short walk from the Presbyterian Church is this smaller cemetery, which is up a short set of stairs from street level. It contains a monument "To the memory of the patriots who fell at Springfield, June 23, 1780," **[14]** and the graves of at least five Revolutionary War soldiers: **[15]**

Jacob Brookfield
1722 -1782
Captain - 1st Regiment NJ Militia

Daniel Reeve
1758 - 1780
Private, 2nd Regiment NJ Militia

Abraham Woolley
1756-1812
Captain - NJ Militia

Joseph Horton
Died September 7, 1807, Age 71
Captain

Isaac Reeve
1745 - 1780
Captain, NJ Militia

Revolutionary war-era time capsule found in Massachusetts state house

Associated Press in Boston
Thursday 11 December 2014

theguardian.com

- Box dating from 1795 will be x-rayed to determine its contents
- Historians believe Samuel Adams, Paul Revere and others placed capsule

Massachusetts officials work to remove a time capsule embedded in the cornerstone of the State House in Boston on Thursday. Photograph: Elise Amendola/AP Paul Revere, American patriot and silversmith, is believed to be among those who placed the time capsule. Photograph: Hulton Archive/Getty Images

Crews worked carefully on Thursday to remove a time capsule dating back to 1795 from the granite cornerstone of the Massachusetts statehouse, where historians believe it was originally placed by Revolutionary war luminaries Samuel Adams and Paul Revere among others.

The time capsule is believed to contain items such as old coins and newspapers, but the condition of the contents was not known and the Massachusetts secretary of state, William Galvin, speculated that some could have deteriorated over time.

Originally made of cowhide, the time capsule was believed to have been embedded in the granite cornerstone of the building when construction on the state Capitol began in 1795. Adams was governor of Massachusetts at the time.

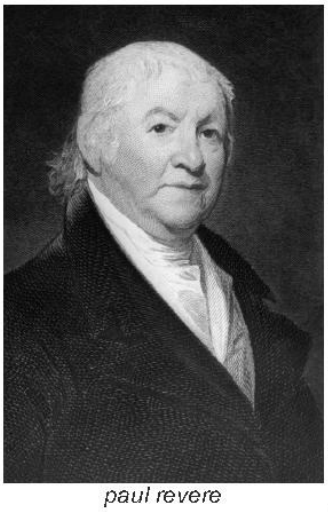
The time capsule was removed in the mid-19th century and its contents transferred to a copper box, Galvin said.

It is being removed now because of an ongoing water filtration project at the building.

The time capsule will not be immediately opened but instead taken to Boston's Museum of Fine Arts, where it will be x-rayed to determine its contents.

Pamela Hatchfield, a conservator at the museum, slowly chiselled away at the cornerstone on Thursday to reach the box, a process that was expected to take several hours to complete. Galvin said the plan is to return it to the site sometime next year.

The excavation comes just months after another time capsule was uncovered from the Old State House, which served as the state's first seat of government. That long-forgotten time capsule, dating to 1901, turned up in a lion statue atop the building and when opened, was found to contain a potpourri of well-preserved items including newspaper clippings, a book on



paul revere

foreign policy and a letter from journalists of the period.

- alloomis

i believe it will reveal that sam adams was a drug smuggler, revere a courier for a terrorist group.

- Robert Rudolph

Message "Elizabeth Warren is a demagogue" still awaiting interpretation.

- tomkun

A letter from journalists of the period which said... fuck you! Lets finish right here fuck you all!

- spicyketchup

This is so epic. As a student of US history - this fascinates me.

- Shane57

Any chance they could put Dick Chaney in the corner stone before re-sealing it, as a warning to people in the future.

    - Gerald Sobel

    Cheney in one corner, Bush in the other, both wearing dunce caps!

    - 124C41Seer

    I applaud your intention, but there are probably too few corners to serve all the deserving dignitaries.

- Evildoernot

I tip my hat to the person or persons who thought releasing this information might be a good idea one day after the torture report was released. An obvious reminder about how far off our original course we have veered. I thought about adding to the long list of jokes found here but I still have hope for America. Time for a fearless and thorough moral inventory.

    - Glenji

    I'm not sure what golden age of moral probity you are harking back you. The United States (like most countries) has always acted in what it saw as its own best interest with little or no concern for the consequences. The genocide of the native american peoples was just the first in a very long list of such actions.

- MarkPS57

Or is it just a picture of some new state worker "limbo dance" hazing ritual with a time capsule cover story because, "if the taxpayers knew...'oly 'ell there'd be a crap fiesta for sure!" ?

- babyant

Why in the corner stone? Probably Free Masons I'd imagine.

- Tim Veater

Could there have been a more opportune moment in the history of the United States of America, to rediscover it and the past it represents?

- 2ndSkin

1795, eh? It will probably contain Ukip's manifesto. And just in the nick of time.

- KingOllie

Just makes sure it doesn't contain a singing, dancing frog with a taste for Tin Pan Alley tunes...(thank you, Warner Brothers)

- David Licht

Neat! Can't wait to find out what's in the time capsule.

- RobertHickson2014

It's smaller than a cigar box and the worker found 5 silverish coins loose. The box is a copper alloy mix and has emerged as green.

The most valuable thing would be some writings or notes.

A reminder to stay free from foreign entanglements would be nice.

    - CitizenCarrier

    And if the French had remained aloof from foreign entanglements?

- CitizenCarrier

Geraldo Rivera will be doing the opening...

Come on folks, THAT is funny.

    - Justlyjohn

> How many remember the Capone wall. Apparently you do. Geraldo tried to forget years ago.

- Zwoman48

It was churned up by the Founders whirling in their graves.

- Scatman Ash

Mid 19th century the items were transferred into a copper box, so how do we know they put them all back in? Will there be junk from the Civil War stuffed inside? Besides, 1795 is not long ago enough that there would be nothing from that era already in current museums or archives, nor is there a shortage of Adams and Revere items from years earlier. I am not expecting anything truly news worthy coming out of that capsule.

- Dropped_Stitch

> The time capsule was removed in the mid-19th century and its contents transferred to a copper box

So it's already been opened, and is not a new discovery as such - was it really 'found' then, as the headline says?

Also one wonders whether its contents are already known?

- ID7635026

Full of chocolate biscuits

  - RobertHickson2014

  The missing tea.

- HondaOxford

all men have a right to bare arms.....

  - illbthr22

  I wear t-shirts all the time.

- stniuk

Shit themselves if they find an iPhone 30 in there.

  - PurelyCoincidental

  Never give them nukes!

- Felipe_Verde

Where is Geraldo Rivera when you really need him?

- smugtory

A note stating 'Beware of the bankers' they will return.

    - PurelyCoincidental

    Andrew Jackson was right!

- lsfischer

Those guys certainly knew what to do when the law got out of hand. What did they have that we don't? Self- respect.

- lsfischer

If there is anything in that time capsule which indicates that 'The People' were respected as human beings, we'll never hear about it. Surely the government will obscene with the thing to make sure it contains no 'subversive' real democracy.

    - Zwoman48

    You mean abscond. Although the government ARE obscene.

- Doug_Niedermeyer

Probably find out they did mean arming bears after all

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April 13, 2012 — Richmond's Hollywood Cemetery is a great cemetery both for its idyllic environs and the massive amount of history decaying within its dirt clods…you just have to watch out for its resident vampire.

Opened in 1849, this cemetery in the Virginia capital is located on 130 acres right on the James River. There's nothing too city about the cemetery, though, with its natural layout, variety of funeral art, and impenetrable sense of elsewhere. All the best cemeteries have that latter.

But that doesn't mean there's not a lot of Richmond therein, either. Beneath its grass blades are two presidents of the United States, James Monroe and John Tyler; the President of the Confederate States, Jefferson Davis; a teacher of Edgar Allan Poe; a couple of Pulitzer-Prize winners; and some 18,000 confederate soldiers who have been memorialized with a 90-foot-tall stone pyramid that dates back to just a few years after the end of the Civil War itself. I've stuck a bunch of pics of this stuff at the end of the post. We have to get to the vampire first.

And for that, we head to the mausoleum of W.W. Pool. The genealogy records say that William Wortham Pool was a Mississippi-born bookkeeper who died in 1913 at the age of 80. His mausoleum doesn't tell us anything more. It's simple, built into a hill, and bears his name and year of death on the lintel. A small lamb sculpture tops it above a relief of a child surrounded by animals. Nothing ominous. Nothing strange.

Nevertheless, people say it's the home of a vampire. Here's why.

In 1925, about a month before Halloween, a railway tunnel in the nearby Church Hill section of the city collapsed. It was being refurbished at the time, killing a handful of workers inside and burying the train that they were using.

However, from the rubble sprung a ghastly creature dripping blood and flesh. It ran straight for Hollywood Cemetery and disappeared inside Mr. Pool's mausoleum. Some say returned to the mausoleum. Its pursuers couldn't find it.

So that's the story. Mr. Pool is a vampire who was outed as a result of the collapse. Here's what makes the story really interesting, though.

This tunnel tragedy actually happened, with hundreds of workers fleeing the scene. One man's escape caused particular alarm. His name was Benjamin Mosby, and he was a fireman working near the boiler of the train, which exploded in the collapse.

He fled from the tunnel scalded and flayed from the steam, broken and lacerated from the falling rock, and, assumedly, out of his mind with pain. Some speculate that he might indeed have run toward the cemetery because that was also the direction of the adjacent river.

He didn't, however, disappear into a mausoleum, Pool's or anybody else's. Instead, he was taken to Richmond's Grace Hospital, where he died soon after. Why his story became a vampire one and not a ghost story, I'm not really sure. I suppose he could have run past some unsuspecting children whose only context for the entire thing was that a shocking and grisly creature ran past them toward the graveyard.

The cemetery is located on 412 Cherry Street. Finding the mausoleum is pretty easy. I went in having only a picture and pretty much drove right to it. It's not too far from the entrance and can be found in the first line of mausoleums that you see.

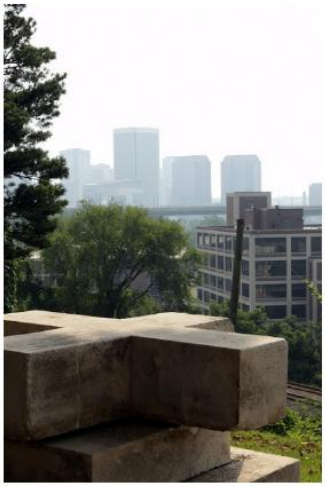
As I mentioned, there's nothing really cool about the grave plot itself, other than the inherent coolness that all mausoleums can boast. It has no windows, and when I peeked into the locked black metal grating that covers the door, it only revealed a solid door a couple of feet beyond.

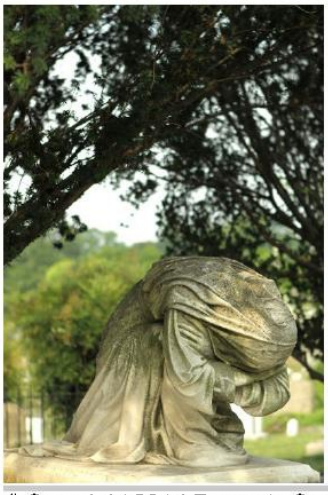
So the vampire story ends a bit weakly, but the real story ends spooky as all. After the collapse, they dug in to find bodies of some of the missing men. They only discovered one, that of an engineer named Tom Mason. Eerily, he was sitting upright in the cab where he had been trapped. They were never able to find any of the other bodies nor excavate the train fully, so they just bricked up the entrance. The overgrown wall stands to this day near the corner of 18th and Marshall Street. Attempts to enter in the intervening years have been curtailed due to fears of unstabling the thickly settled surrounding area.

So whatever went on inside that tunnel on the October day that caused a cave-in, made bodies disappear, and involved a vampire may never be known.

Excuse me. I need to go write a screenplay.

John Tyler's grave is marked by the pillar. James Monroe's is the wrought-iron cage behind it.





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Road Workers Found This Mysterious Box Underground. They Decided To Look Inside And...(Photos) | Paranormal

beforeitsnews.com

11/28/2014, 7:00
By Jeffery Pritchett
Thursday, August 7, 2014 13:12

Road workers in the eastern China were given the task of widening a road in the city of Taizhou, in the Jiangsu Province. They were digging about 6 feet below the surface when they came across something completely by chance that no one was expecting to find. They hit something solid while digging and after a bit of research they realized that they had actually hit buried tomb. It was time to call in professional archeologists to unearth and reveal this mystery. They found that the chamber was over 700 years old.

Here is the tomb after it was unearthed. A team worked together to open the box without disturbing the contents.

1

Here the team prepares to see what was inside for the first time after 700 years.

Encased in the stone tomb was a wooden box.

After opening the box they found that the contents were rare silks and linens lying in some sort of brown liquid.

They discovered a mummy of a woman under the layers of fabric.

2

They were amazed to see the body and contents in near perfect shape for being underground for over 700 years.

They think the mummy was a high ranking member of the Ming Dynasty.

She was adorned with beautiful jewelry from the time period.

The team carefully moved the woman out of her tomb for the first time.

She was wrapped in many rare layers of fabric that would have been common for a high ranking member of the Ming Dynasty.

3

4

5

6

Whatever she was preserved in was remarkable. She even had her eyebrows still attached.

This close up of her shoes shows how well preserved her corpse was.

This is a rare find and with advancements in archeology today she will stay preserved in a museum.

What an incredible find to just stumble upon. This find will answer many questions about the Ming Dynasty and the forbidden city in China. After excavating the site, archeologists found 2 other coffins that they are researching now. Im sure we will see more on this story as time passes and data is analyzed. Only time will unearth the beautiful secrets from the past.

Source:

Comments

▪ • ○ PaulTarsuss

Amazing discoveries being made these days! Here's a really cool one too.....

/science-and-technology/2014/04/ancient-high-performance-electric-motors-discovered-that-are-still-in-production-2685290.html

Good Journies

7

8

9

- carsonking

Cool.

- beautiful find !!! ???

this is known as Necromancy
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Necromancy

Necromancy /ˈnɛkrəˌmænsi/ or nigromancy is a form of magic involving communication with the deceased – either by summoning their spirit as an apparition or raising them bodily – for the purpose of divination, imparting the means to foretell future events or discover hidden knowledge, or to use the deceased as a weapon, as the term may sometimes be used in a more general sense to refer to black magic or witchcraft.[

- Damine

Or, alternatively, more about people just being cryptic rather occult.

- Burt Gummer

I do not see any necromancy , sorcery, black magic at all here. This is an archaeological find that gives us a rare glimpse at an actual person that lived 700 years ago. There is no raising of the dead to communicate with their dead spirit here —just a rare opportunity to have a glimpse back in time. I am amazed at the prospect of being able to the well preserved face of a person that was actually alive from the Royal Court of the Ming Dynasty. These pictures are very fascinating to me ; especially the well preserve shoes. Imagine she wore those shoes while treading around the Forbidden City during the Ming Dynasty– amazing !

It's history not black magic; please stop being so puritanical . When the researchers start enchanting and performing rituals with the body then we can

10

11

12

start in with the occult accusations .

- Osimandias

Actual person is a mis-nomer.

- Angel31

Do you think they took the time to preserve her, so we could dig her up. Poke and prod her, then display her out for others to marvel at.

- CloudyOne

Why else would you preserve a body, if not to be seen again? Otherwise we'd just let her rot like all the other corpses.

- necromancy?

And this is how the idiom, "by a stretch of the imagination" was born.

- FusedNail

You digit-adders can ruin anything.

- Trex

This looks like a simple burial you twat !

- DennisB

Looking forward to more information on this discovery. Great find.

- MileHiLife

Yeah, modern man is SO much more advanced and civilized than our ancestors…right

Great find, thanks for sharing!

- MSG Chicken

They open it up to find a corpse! How nice!

13

- Dr. Bob Uda, PhD, CM, CHSP, ILO

Wow, this is an exciting find. A lot of good knowledge will be acquired by studying this corpse. Good job, China!

- HereAmI

No information, good or otherwise, will be revealed by sacrilegiously digging up this person. Imagine, Bob, that your mother whom you recently buried (I'm hypothesizing here, I hope she is still alive) were to be dug up at some future time for the world to gawk at. This simply reveals the moral bankruptcy of people today. They know the price of everything, and the value of nothing. No respect.

- I\\\'assassino

You must hate history then and have no sense of wonder. Must not have a drive to learn as well. I feel sorry for you. And for the record, if someone hundreds of years in the future wants to dig up me or my family to study how we used to live and such, I would be all for it. Unlike you, I would love being apart of history. Even in a very small role. You have a very sheltered life.

- BlueDissident

All the perfect little stitches on the footwear, amazing.

- The Real Deal

I thought the exact same thing.

- Anonymous

~ "Looks like, SHE is not RESTING IN PEACE any longer" ~

- CrowPie

Road hard and put up wet.

- Mayhem

No you didn't!

That's a sexist joke where I'm from. Presumably an equestrian joke where you're from. (rode)

        - CrowPie

        I KNOw its a sexist joke…she 'was buried under a 'road' …..and she was in a liquid…..

        - CrowPie

        Come on Mayhem….it's no longer sexist or off color after the spelling is changed……..granted it is a requirement that it is in written form….

- Anonymous

~ "What if there was a CURSE, affixed to this tomb, & anyone tampering with this tomb, remember KING TUT, what if this was PANDORA'S BOX, & opening it LET THE GENIE OUT OF THE BOTTLE" ~

    - Sunshine

    They discovered later that maybe it wasn't a curse after all. Maybe it was ebola they releaeed into the air. I'm not kidding, even though it sounds like I am.

    It really IS fantastic, the preservation of this little lady.

- earlcity

No curse of the Mummy here, I hope for the road workers?
Too me, this is a desecretion of graves..
Try to this with one of the recent leaders of Communist China, and you're shot dead, I presume..

- Smarty

A couple of beaver shots would have been nice…

    - HereAmI

    You are disgusting and should be ashamed of yourself.

- Geeper

Was expecting some photoshopped nonsense at the half-way point, but no! Great photos, amazing find.

- baguspedia

wow amazing find….

good for knowledge to know the past.. great job.. well done

- Drumhead

Wow! This is AMAZING! Great story-Thank you.

- coolsaint

Anyone notice the elongated skull as in Peru

    - poix

    she has been laying on it for 700 yrs

- Clive

Before it's news? This was found years ago…

http://www.dailymail.co.uk/sciencetech/article-1362957/700-year-old-mummy-road-workers-east-China-excellent-condition.html

    - Savage

    Clive. Nice to see another one complaining about old news on this site. Judging from the comments there are a lot of people who have not seen this before. Other comments just further cement my beliefs that there are some really disturbed folks out there (And yet they vote) Sorry we are not all as enlightened as you. For Your enlightenment B4iN is a forum for people to post Their articles. B4iN does not vet these stories. If you don't like the material here then exercise your right to get your entertainment elsewhere.
    This site was much more interesting before the trolls discovered it and do nothing but complain about content . You found this site Please lose it if you can't accept the principle behind it.

        - Clive

        "Stories accepted for inclusion by Before It's News® must be newsworthy current events"

        Current events, not past events.

        - Mayhem

        Stick around, Clive, you ain't seen nothing yet. B4IN didn't meet their high ideals and is little more than the current site with the least censorship. So long as manners are observed anyone can say anything they like. Sense, reason and logic don't have to feature in that.

        So the story is old: you pointed that out and you're right, now let it go. Did we learn much from the find?

- Okeyd57

I wonder what the brown liquid was ?

- redbluez

Disturbing the peace. Tuck her right back where you found her…with her jewelry. See how quickly that ring was off her finger??? Smh

- resonator

you're turning me away from wonton soup ya know

- Cylent1

Resting in a museum? Whatever happened to "Rest in Peace"? Put her back!

    - with all her jewerly…

- UberNuts

I wondered what had happened to Yoko Ono…

- Templar

IMO if they show her, she should have all her jewelry on her.

Being a Necromancer for Lord Enki, I can attest spirits that are wandering around and in her case possibly due to suicide tend to get VERY ANGRY at their belongings being messed around.

- Gillian

It's not right that they took her ring off!

They should have left it on her they had no right to remove it!
:(:(

- rev

700 years? This woman definitely has living relatives. DNA testing today is extremely sophisticated. Instead of digging her out of her tomb box and stripping her and desecrating her, the first thing is a DNA sample should be taken, her relatives found, and they should be consulted as to what to do with her. Imagine if this were done to the grave of your great great grandmother. How would you feel? I mean, the first thing they did while she was still at the construction site, was take that ring off her finger. What disrespect! Surely there must be another way to deal with this "find".

- Thane36425

At least one other mummy similar to this one has been found. A couple of decades ago one was found, also female and also wrapped in silk and in some kind of liquid bath,

that had well preserved it. They should have taken a lot of samples of that liquid and replicated it, if possible. I say if possible because the previous mummy's preserving fluid may have been high in mercury contents which would make it illegal to use just about everywhere. Still, if they could make something very similar, you can bet there would be a market for it.

- Anonymous

This took place in the middle of a parking lot??

- STRAW

RIP????

- Anonymous

Grave diggers.

- Crunkatlanta

who knows the real reason why she was laid to rest like that . They could have open the most evil this world has ever seen. The next headlines will read- Those workers have disappeared..

- st

ya we get it who cares

- judas iscariot

They have found their mother… And they have disturbed her rest. She will now shine her light on all those who deceive her children

- REMAINFREE

I don't know what the hell B4thenews did to their website, but I cannot navigate on any of their web pages without it getting hung up. Too much misc video playing all the time. Dam this is frustrating!

- The 12th Gate of Zabukinaritu 7/23/2018 = 911/6.6.6.?

The Mind dynasty is a LIE! It never existed and there is zero proof that it ever existed! It is more fascist lies being shoved down our throats by Rabbi HUSSEIN Obama and his Zionist cronies!

- theonetruesatan

Very cool. I'm amazed at the condition of the body.

Rotherwood Mansion is a historic, private home that is located above the Holston River in eastern Tennessee. It is said to be haunted by two ghosts, although only one of them is the spirit credited with giving Rotherwood it's horrific reputation. The mansion was built in 1818 by Frederick Ross, who actually founded the town of Rossville, which later became Kingsport. He was a successful plantation owner and proud father of a daughter named Rowena, a girl who was admired and loved by everyone in the region.

Rowena was educated in the finest schools of the east and had only been out of school for two years when she fell in love with a young man from a neighboring town. They became engaged, but tragedy struck on the afternoon of their wedding when a boat capsized in the Holston River and the young man drowned.

The tragedy greatly affected Rowena and she was never the same again. Two years later, she did marry again but a short time later, he died of yellow fever. Ten years after, she married another man and this union blessed Rowena with a daughter. A few years later, death came into Rowena's life once again and her daughter also died. The woman could take no more.... and she committed suicide. Shortly after, the "Lady in White" began to be reported at Rotherwood. Rowena is the most frequently reported spirit at the mansion as people have been sighting her near the river banks for more than 125 years. Some say that she is searching for her drowned lover of long ago.

Rowena's ghost had already been reported many times when tragedy came to Frederick Ross once again. He fell into terrible financial trouble and he was forced to sell his estate to a man named Joshua Phipps in 1847. Phipps was a cruel slave holder who had a terrible reputation for evil and harshness... he is believed to be the other ghost of Rotherwood.

The mansion and the plantation prospered under Phipps until the first year of the Civil war, despite his bad reputation, cruel treatment of his slaves and general dislike for the people of the community. Summer came and Phipps came down with some sort of horrible illness that forced him to his bed. Many believe that a curse placed on him by his mistreated slaves may have taken his life. He was lying in his bed when, according to legend, a swarm of black flies came and covered his face, crawling into his mouth and nose and eventually suffocating him.

On July 10, hundreds of mourners and curiosity seekers assembled at Rotherwood for the funeral. The casket was loaded onto a funeral carriage but despite all attempts by the teamsters, the wagon refused to move. The horses strained at the small load but the wheels would not even turn. Then suddenly, the skies grew dark, as though a storm was approaching, and then bolts of lightning illuminated the sky. The canopy covering the casket of Joshua Phipps began to move and then an enormous, black dog jumped out from beneath it and ran off

across the hillside.

Needless to say, the crowd was stunned at this inexplicable event and it is still discussed in the region today. It has also been said that this "dog" has made frequent appearances over the years and sometimes can be heard howling during the night.... especially when it storms.

After the funeral, Phipps was laid to rest and the locals returned to their homes. No one believed that Phipps would ever rest there in peace...and they were right. Many claimed that Phipps' ghost prowled the halls of Rotherwood at night laughing and screaming and yanking the covers off the beds.

Is the house still haunted? No one knows for sure and the current residents aren't saying.

The historic mansion of Rotherwood is now a private residence and is located in Kingsport in the eastern region of Tennessee, just off of the Virginia border.

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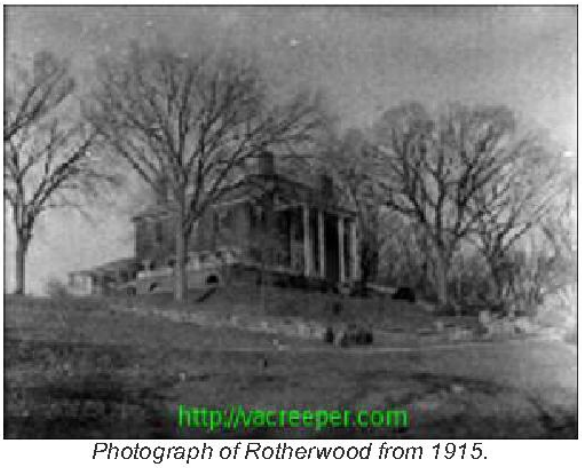
Folklore and Ghost Stories, Forgotten Structures and Buildings, History, Myths and Legends

by admin • August 1, 2014



Photograph of Rotherwood from 1915.

The Rotherwood Mansion, located beside the Netherland Inn Road, is believed to be home to many spirits. Witnesses have reported seeing a ghostly woman in white on the surrounding property. The ghost of Rowena Ross still searches for her beloved, still in the wedding dress she had on when she committed suicide. She's known as the "white lady" who appears suddenly, occasionally in front of moving cars on the nearby bridge. A massive black dog roams the property, believed to be the spirit of wicked Joshua Phipps. The phantom hound is said to be the "Hound of Hell."

Reverend F.A. Ross constructed the home several decades before the Civil War. Ross had a beautiful daughter named Rowena who was destined to endure a tragic life. At 17, Rowena was secretly engaged to a dashing young man, but her family didn't approve. She snuck out of her room one night to meet him by the river below.

Unfortunately, her brother also followed and a struggle ensued between them. The two fell into the Holston River, which was raging from recent rains. Both drowned. Rowena fell into a deep depression. Even after a year, as her family celebrated her new engagement, she wasn't any happier.

When her new suitor abruptly died from a virulent strain of yellow fever, she believed she would never see happiness. She flung herself into the same river that killed her first love and her brother. Now, her ghost walks the property. Some say she's doomed to repeat her life leading up to her suicide for eternity.

Rev. Ross's life, also marred by tragedy, took a turn for the worse years after the loss of his daughter. He lost his business and ended up losing Rotherwood altogether. He sold it to Joshua Phipps and so began another reign of terror.

Phipps was a brutal slave master who kept his slaves chained in his basement. His mistress was a former slave who was as cruel as he was. Rumor suggests she was a devout practitioner of voodoo and used her craft against any slave or white who gave her trouble.

Phipps died in the 1860s. It is said he suffered from an incurable fever. While he was being fanned on his bed, a countless number of flies swarmed into his nostrils and mouth. He was

suffocated. His coffin grew so heavy during its procession to the burial that the horses couldn't pull it. The lid came open and a massive black dog sprang out. It became known as the "hound of hell."

The slaves rebelled against his mistress for her cruelty towards them while Joshua lived and they murdered her. She, too, became a vengeful spirit that roams the property. Today, you can hear Phipp's wicked laugher through the halls. Many visitors have reported seeing and hearing a number of voices and noises, some have been physically attacked.

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Decomposing trees, dilapidated houses, and other items buried over 70 years by a rapidly moving sand dune could be responsible for a sudden and mysterious hole that swallowed a six-year-old boy at Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore last summer.

That is the working theory of a team of scientists who are scrambling to figure out how and why the boy was buried under 11 feet (3.4 meters) of sand for 3.5 hours on June 12, 2013. The fine, silky grains dropped out from under him as he explored Mount Baldy, the most popular destination at the national park about 60 miles (96.6 kilometers) southeast of Chicago.

As a result, scientists are using ground-penetrating radar that shoots as far as 75 feet (22.9 meters) below the dune's surface to build a detailed, three-dimensional map of trees, buildings and more that could be buried there. They're also combing old aerial photos and historical records for clues to what is hidden beneath the sand and could, therefore, collapse. (See "Singing Sand Dunes Explained.")

"There may be houses underneath where we're standing," said G. William Monaghan, as he stood atop the 142-foot (43.3-meter) dune on the south shore of Lake Michigan. Monaghan is senior research scientist at Indiana Geological Survey at Indiana University Bloomington, and one of three lead investigators on the Mount Baldy mystery.

While the boy is alive and well, Mount Baldy remains closed indefinitely to the park's nearly two million annual visitors.

A Dune Biopsy

Already, the investigative team has found a home that was buried by sand after the Mount Baldy area joined the national lakeshore in the early 1970s. Researchers suspect more remain, perhaps with barns and sheds, as the houses stood uninhabited after the park service—and the dune—took over. (See pictures of sand dunes from around the world.)

While about six more holes have been discovered since last summer, others may have gone unnoticed, researchers said.

Scientist Todd Thompson, assistant director of research for Indiana Geological Survey, compared the entire process to a CT scan. CT scans combine x-ray images taken from various angles to produce a detailed picture of bones and tissues in the body. They commonly are used to find tumors and other problems.

Then, "if you see something, you need to go do a biopsy," Thompson said.

On a sand dune, that biopsy means taking core samples of the dune, which involves sticking long, hollow plastic tubes deep into the sand at various locations to pull up the layers of sand, dirt, or anything else buried there. Monaghan said he wouldn't be surprised to find a shingle.

Shifting Sands

A few different factors are responsible for Mount Baldy's rapid and continuing shift southwest, as the dune has moved about 394 feet (120 meters) in the past 70 years, researchers said. (See "Dune May Doom 'Star Wars' Set.")

The first contributor is nature: The south shore of Lake Michigan collects sediment from around the lake, which helped build and maintain the dune in the first place, researchers said. The fine sand is naturally picked up and carried by the wind and water, ever shifting the dune.

But development at the harbor in nearby Michigan City, Indiana, has stopped a lot of sediment that once landed at Mount Baldy from making it all the way there, Thompson said. That reduces the amount of new sand coming in and replenishing the dune. (See also "How (And Why) to Build a Dune.")

In addition, scientists said, park visitors have enjoyed Mount Baldy for decades. Those years of hiking, sliding and picnicking on the dune have eliminated much of the natural vegetation that once grew there and helped hold the fine sand in place.

Still, Mount Baldy is the only place that Erin Argyilan, the third investigator, said she has ever heard of sudden and deep holes appearing in the sand dune, which disappear almost as quickly. Argyilan is associate professor of geology at Indiana University Northwest.

The event last summer, Argyilan said, "really was hard for me to wrap my brain around."

A final report on the $90,000 investigation, paid for by the National Park Service, is expected next summer.

National Geographic

Russian activist seeks Halloween ban

23 October 2014 bbc.com

Last updated at 10:19 ET

People dressed in Halloween costumes at a parade in New York

Halloween revellers like these in New York would not be welcome at Mr Federov's house

A Russian political activist has called on the government to ban public celebrations of Halloween, as part of a campaign against American influence.

Georgy Federov, a member of the Civic Chamber parliamentary scrutiny body, says people across the country have complained to him about "drunk youngsters dressed as corpses and monsters scaring decent members of the public on the streets". Celebrations in night clubs often "degenerate into orgies", he adds in a letter to Culture Minister Vladimir Medinsky, according to Izvestia newspaper. Referring to current "strained relations with the US", he says Halloween has been imposed on Russians and is foreign to their cultural traditions. "Some extremists use these 'holidays' for propaganda purposes... You need to launch counter-propaganda. We have our own traditional festivals, which at least do not run contrary to religious ethics and human morality," he says. Mr Federov suggests authorities could offer venues financial incentives "to stop decking themselves out with pumpkins and sham corpses".

A ministry spokesman says they have not yet received Mr Federov's letter, and notes that Halloween is usually marked in cafes and restaurants, which lie beyond the ministerial remit. "We have no plans to celebrate Halloween in theatres, concert halls or libraries," he tells Izvestia. Social media comment ranges as usual from support to mockery of the proposal, with one Izvestia reader suggesting a compromise called "Hangovereen - our own holiday when your pumpkinheads ache."

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Taking selfies 'spreads head lice'

27 October 2014 bbc.com

Last updated at 08:59 ET

Young people gather for a selfie

Not too close! Selfies could have some itchy consequences, according to a Russian health agency

Young people should stop taking selfies in order to avoid catching head lice, a Russian government agency has advised.

The selfie craze, where people cram together to fit into an arms-length photo, is the main reason for the spread of the parasites, according to the Kursk regional department of Rospotrebnadzor, a government body which advises on human well-being. Taking photos in such close quarters with another person's head means the lice can jump from one hairy home to another, it warns, noting that doctors have banned children with head lice from going to school.

Rospotrebnadzor's decisions have proved controversial in the past. Its former head, Gennady Onishchenko, once suggested killing crows, describing them as feathered wolves which spread bird flu. He was also associated with banning food and drink imports from countries unpopular with the Kremlin. The agency's lice advice has been mocked by social media users in Russia. "Are they suggesting most young Russians have lice?" Georgy Klochkov asks on the Lenta news website. Another user says: "This is wonderful!! Onishchenko's work still flourishes - the more bonkers the reason, the better."

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SAVE OUR SKULLS

A Campaign to Restore the Hyrtl Skull Collection at the Mütter Museum

Logo for our Save our Skulls Exhibit

Image of our Save our Skulls Exhibit

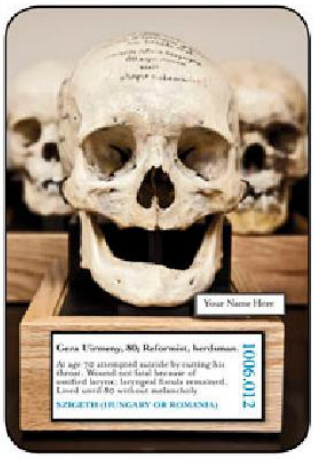

Image of our Save our Skulls Exhibit

Thank you for your interest in our Save Our Skulls campaign! We very much appreciate the tremendous support we have received for this amazing collection. To view our skulls catalog, click **HERE**.

The interest generated by several recent articles has been extremely exciting. If you haven't had a chance, please take a look at the articles below:

- *Greg Miller's* Wired.com article: Adopt a Skull and Save a Collection That Helped Debunk Phrenology (retweeted by *Ed Yong*, award-winning British science writer, blogger, and journalist)
- *Daniel Kelley's* Reuters.com article: Gruesome Gift that Keeps on Giving: $200 to Sponsor Museum Skulls
- *Olivia B. Waxman's* Time.com article: Museum Says Human Skulls Make Great Holiday Gifts

Thanks to this tremendous support, all of our Hyrtl Skulls have been sponsored through 2014.

Please consider making a donation to the Mütter Museum of The College of Physicians of Philadelphia, by clicking **HERE**!

Watch the new Save our Skulls YouTube video!

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Scared Mother: “Is there a ghost inside my child?"

wtkr.com

Posted 9:42 pm, November 7, 2014, by Barbara Ciara, Updated at 09:19am, November 11, 2014

Virginia Beach, Va. – U.S. Marine Sgt. Val Lewis died in a bombing explosion October 23, 1983 in Beirut, Lebanon. Yet 4-year-old Andrew, who lives in Virginia Beach, remembers it as his death.

“He just starts crying hysterically and I say “What’s wrong Andrew?” and he says, “Why did you let me die in that fire?’” says Michele Lucas, Andrew’s mother.

Is Andrew running away from a past life?

His mother, Michele, says he is saying things and recalling memories that no one his age should know.

“Scared me, scared me! I didn’t know if there was a spirit coming out of him,” says Michele.

Michele wanted to find out what were these memories – and Andrew gave her some very specific clues.

“He kept saying he lived at 860 Main Street in Sumter, Georgia,” Michele says.

“I started doing some research and nothing came about until we started piecing stuff together with the TV show,” says Michele.

The show producers of, ‘Ghost Inside My Child’ helped the Lucas family connect the information provided from Andrew to a group of marines who died in the 1983 bomb blast in Lebanon decades before Andrew was born.

In a segment that will be featured on the show, Andrew’s parents revealed photos of the six marines who died in the bombing.

That family decided to go to Georgia and visit the gravesite where Sgt. Lewis was buried to see if it would give Andrew some closure and close the door on the past memories.

“He went right up to the gravesite, he was okay. Put the flowers down and then he took off and ran to another grave and it was a marine and he said, ‘That’s my friend,’” Michele recalled.

Instead of closure, the trip to the grave site produced more questions and more strange occurrences when they returned home.

“About two weeks ago, there was an emblem on my wall and it was like somebody went up to it and turned it, and it went right back,” says Michele. “So it’s kinda creeping me out. I don’t know if I’ve picked up spirits while I was in the graveyard. I don’t know.”

The big reveal of having Andrew come face-to-face with his alleged past life did not make the memories vanish! Now the family wonders what should they do next to make it all go away.

“I would like to get a psychic, maybe help us through and see what’s going on. Is my house haunted, is my child haunted? I don’t know,” says Michele.

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Author: Owen Conflenti, Anchor, oconflenti@kprc.com Debbie Levy Strauss, News Producer
Published On: Oct 27 2014 10:15:00 PM CDT Updated On: Oct 27 2014 11:04:08 PM CDT
HOUSTON -

Blood sucking, dark and evil -- the images have become part of modern pop culture, but Local 2 is learning Houston has its own self-proclaimed vampire community that isn't quite as dark.

The community has lawyers, teachers and maybe even your next-door neighbor.

"There's no telling how many of us there are," said Houston vampire Tarik Rever.

Rever has long black hair, shining eyes.

"Natural light affects me," said Rever. "I'm not really fond of garlic."

But he's more than meets the eye. By day, Rever works at a local store.

"Just ringing up people, cashiering, selling stuff, you know, promotions, event planning," said Rever.

By night, Rever is not sucking blood or preying on the dead at graveyards. He's an artist. On weekends he devotes time to re-habbing a house for the art community.

"We basically do stuff like restoration projects that restore older houses and bring culture in," said Rever.

Rever suspects there are a surprisingly large number of vampires in Houston.

"It's definitely over 1,000, easy," said Rever.

Rever said many are afraid to acknowledge their true being.

"Sometimes people will go against their natural instincts because the pull of gravity of this world. You know, whether they go to a 9-to-5 corporate job or they're a teacher or have certain expectations thrust upon by their families," said Rever.

So how can you tell if you might be vampire?

"In most cases people have an inert, dormant part of them that can be vampiric. I'm starting to feel sick when I'm not around people. That's a big thing," said Rever. "You know, if you're feeling healthier around people you might be subconsciously pulling in their energy. Someone has a sense of perception like their mental acuity is very sharp, their sense of smell, their hearing. I (won't) say superhuman, but acute."

Rever said he's proud to be a vampire.

"I'm just like right here, drinking in the energy of this room. I think it's a natural thing for me so I don't fight it at all," said Rever.

Rever said you shouldn't be afraid of vampires, saying they're genuinely nice and jovial.

If you think you might be a vampire or just want to learn more, you can connect with Rever's vampire group ANKH through Facebook.

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Seven-year-old girl's mouth suddenly swells up - you won't believe what the dentist found

mirror.co.uk

- Nov 19, 2014 14:28
- By Katie Butler

Dr Ajoy Roychoudhary, head of oral and maxillofacial surgery at New Delhi medical instute, said: "It was shocking to see"

A little girl complaining of mouth pain was taken to the dentist - and found to have 202 TEETH.

The Indian youngster had complained to her mum about 'severe pain' and had swellings in her mouth.

Her businesswoman mother, living in the Gurgaon area, took her daughter to the dentist to find out what the problem was.

X-rays showed the youngster had suffered from compound odontoma - a complex tumour composed of normal dental tissues that have grown in an irregular way.

The seven-year-old had to endure two hours of surgery to remove the extra gnashers.

Dr Ajoy Roychoudhary, head of oral and maxillofacial surgery at All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi, said: "It was shocking to see such complex situation in the minor's mouth.

Mercury Press

Shocking: Some 200 teeth were found buried in her gums

"Normally we see a few abnormal teeth-like structures in such patients; 202 of them inside the mouth of a seven-year-old is shocking, and our prime task was to get rid of it."

He said although the surgery was relatively simple, it required high precision as a single mistake could cause a jaw fracture - which could lead to permanent deformation.

After surgery the girl, whose name has not been revealed, has been able to chew food and was feeling good.

According to a family relative they are very happy at the successful surgery and pleased the girl can go back to leading a normal life.

Sex-pest ghost nearly destroys marriage

2014 November 29 09:47:13 zimkasi.com

Sex-pest ghost nearly destroys marriage

Published: 2014 September 08 09:30:46
(2035 Views)

48-year-old Deborah Rawson from Hull, UK, was apparently attacked by a sex-pest ghost.

Deborah says: "I'd just finished cleaning and sat down at my kitchen table for a break when a strange feeling came over me.

"It felt as if my chair was wobbling and the tablecloth slid to the floor, taking a plant with it.

"Everything went out of focus but, as I fought hard to get myself together, I saw a misty cloud floating in front of the kitchen window. Slowly, it formed into the shapes of three strangers.

"One was a good-looking bloke in his 30s in black trousers and a white shirt. A woman stood next to him, also about 30, in a long pink dress.

"On the floor was a little girl about five years old. She had mousy brown hair and red tights, and looked the picture of innocence."

Absolutely petrified, Deborah ran out of the house. Her husband Kevin, a construction worker, found her outside, shaking, hours later.

When she told him what had happened he gently suggested she should see a doctor.

"I agreed," recalls Deborah. "I thought maybe I'd just had a funny turn. I went to the GP the next day and was given anti-depressants for anxiety."

But she soon found there was no medication to cure what was going on and the couple eventually moved home because of the alleged haunting.

Strange scraping noises around the house, and a ghostly ball of light in the kitchen, reportedly escalated to something much worse - the male ghost creeping up and breathing heavily on her face.

"I was petrified," says Deborah, and I shouted out 'Who's there? "'Claire!' a voice bellowed back. 'Mark's here, he's watching you'."

Deborah believes Claire was the female phantom in the pink dress. But that did not stop Mark groping her.

"From then on I felt Mark wanted something from me," she says. "He would pull at my dress and one time it felt as if he had pinned me down on the sofa. Another night, as I was falling to sleep, the duvet flew off and I felt Mark's hand on my thigh."

Deborah and Kevin's 23-year marriage began to crumble, and they stopped sleeping together.

"My friends used to call my hubby Kevin the Kitten but he was acting strange, getting aggressive and annoyed at the drop of a hat," says Deborah.

"One day he snapped and told me: 'You've lost the plot with all this ghost stuff.'

"One night when she was passing the bathroom door she thought she heard him whispering to someone on his mobile. He sounded turned on, saying things like 'Hmm, yes, do that.'

"So she recorded it on her phone through the door, then confronted him. But when they played the tape back, it sounded nothing like Kevin!

"We were petrified. Our creepy visitors were trying to drive a wedge between us," she says.

And after 20-odd years in their house, they took to sleeping downstairs. But even then Mark didn't leave Deborah alone. So Kevin, finally convinced, decided they needed an exorcism.

They contacted a Catholic priest who said prayers and sprinkled holy water in all the rooms. And it did work - but not for long.

"Things were quiet for a few days - then I felt Mark's breath on my neck again," says Deborah.

So she called in local psychic Steve Kneeshaw, who took pictures and temperature readings. He found two weird cold spots in the house and saw a hair clip fly across the room.

Steve told them the house had been built on farm land in 1922 but there were no records of any tragedy taking place.

"Deborah and Kevin were subjected to an extreme haunting for which there seems to be no reason," he concluded.

But by then Deborah had had enough. "I can't stand it any more," she told Kevin. So they moved to a rented house, where they've been for over a year.

"Maybe I have some sort of psychic ability. Who knows? she says. "But I'm glad I'm finally rid of my sex-crazed spectre."

Source - Mirror

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roads5-1

MANY LEGENDS ARE ASSOCIATED WITH SHADES OF DEATH ROAD, which winds alongside Jenny Jump State Forest up to Allamuchy in Warren County. One of the more famous street names in New Jersey roadside culture, this road runs along an old haunted lake bed which occasionally has pillars of mist rising from the top of the water. "I don't know what causes it, but I've seen it when I was fishing," states Pete Valliere. "I think it was a legend about the early settlers killing the Indians and throwing them into the lake." This phenomena is also called The Great Meadows Fog. Some people claim to see the dead walking along the road in the mist. Shades of Death Road also runs by the Dark Moon Bar, a must-stop on any Weird N.J. trip. The road was also the site of many deaths once thought to be a curse on the area. But Chrissy Waters, an employee at Chruszâs General Store in Johnsonburg, said that her mother had told her it was some kind of plague caused by the water that was responsible.

"Someone is always trying to steal the sign," says Waters. "That's why they greased up the pole."

IT'S CALLED "GHOST LAKE" FOR A REASON

by FIVEL

I have a couple of stories about Shades of Death. The first one is when I was up there with a couple of friends one night we were all sitting at Ghost Lake. When this car filled with kids drove by, they had flashlights and at first they looked like they were just shining them on us, to try and freak us out. They drove by a couple of times doing this. It didn't work so we motioned for them to pull in, and they asked us if we saw the guy. They told us that there was some guy walking really strangeley by the guardrail on the side of the road. He was wearing a flannel shirt and overalls and kinda limped. But when the kids drove by trying to get a good look at the guy he kept turning his head, then he just disappeared. You have to remember that there were four kids about twenty feet away from this guardrail and we didnt even have a clue about this guy being there.

Another time while parked at Ghost Lake, my friend and I were sitting there in the car and it was about 2 or 3 in the morning. The people who maintained the park were trying to grow grass or something because there was hay on the ground. I remember sitting there for about ten minutes, about to leave, when all of a sudden I saw the hay move, but it wasnt from the wind or anything like that. The hay moved like someone was walking on it.

Footprints went all the way around the car, over and over again. This went on for about ten minutes. The whole time I was sitting there going "Yo did you see that?" and my friend was just like "Yeah thats crazy, what the fuck is that?" and then it just stopped and we left. We don't have any clue what it was that did that but it wasn't wind or any kind of small animal like a chipmunk.

The last story about Shades is the best though. There is an old cabin that's right off of Ghost Lake. You can barely see it in the day, but at night forget it. If you don't know where to look, you wont find it. Me and a couple of kids were inside it one night and I remember it was trashed – the windows were all broken, the walls were falling apart the floor had holes in it, the place was a mess. In one of the far corners of the house is a hallway with a piano built into the wall. The keys are all smashed up on it and that alone is enough to be kinda freaky. We went on exploring the place and then went upstairs, and I was the last person up the stairs. I remember that so there wasnt anybody else downstairs. All of a sudden the piano sounded like someone banged on it really hard. Then it happened again, and there was a crunching sound like the glass on the floor was being stepped on. This sound came closer and closer down the hallway. Our first reaction was that it was the cops. But when we heard the sound right in front of us and saw no flashlights, wee quickly ruled out that one. So someone shined a light on the area and there was nothing there. We took off out of there as quickly as we could and didn't look back. when we got to the road we noticed that there were no cars parked along the side, so it wasn't any body fucking with us.

I wouldn't park on the street anywhere near the cabin, because the whole place is owned by the state and they will prosecute you if they catch you in there. So watch out.

SHADOWY PAST

The Long and Winding Saga of Shades of Death Road

Out of all the grim monikers encountered out on the roads less traveled throughout New Jersey, perhaps none is more foreboding than the infamous Shades of Death Road. Like many places steeped in local lore, reality and legend have become intertwined over the years, obscuring exactly what can be considered fact regarding this byway. What is known is that for centuries, this road has been a dark, mysterious thoroughfare for travellers to cut across one of the more isolated parts of our state. What isn't known is exactly how this street earned its curious name.

According to one legend, murder is at the root of the Shades of Death name. One tale relating to murder says that the original inhabitants of the area surrounding Shades of Death were an unruly band of squatters. Often, men from this vile gang would get into fights over women, and the squabbles would result in the death of one of the participants. As the reputation of these murderous bandits grew, the area they inhabited was named "Shades of Death." When the civilized world encroached on and disbanded the bandits, the last remnant of their control over the meadows was restricted to one road that retained the name they made famous.

Another murder theory says that the road was originally known as "The Shades," because of the low hanging trees which formed a canopy over the length of the street. Legend says that over time, many murders occurred there, and many stayed unsolved, causing local residents to add the sinister "of Death" twist to the formerly pleasant "Shades" name.

There are still other explanations of how Shades acquired its name which have less to do with murder, and more to do with death by natural causes. Shades of Death traverses an area long known as the "Great Meadows," which upon its original settlement was a vast area

of marshy swampland. Around 1850, an outbreak of malaria carrying insects was discovered near a cliff face along Shades. As the citizens around Shades came to expect the yearly outbreaks of this terrible disease, they began to anticipate the annual spate of deaths of friends and family members which came along with it. Like any community, their landmarks, in particular this one road, came to reflect the morose attitude they had regarding these epidemics.

Travelling along Shades of Death today, it is still a mysterious, foreboding place. Whatever the real origins of the name are, something about this tract of land caused its earliest settlers to imbue upon it a name which speaks of death. No matter which legends or facts you choose to believe, it would seem that the road's name was offered up as a warning from beyond the grave to those who might travel this dark path unaware of its potential hazards. Though we may never know for sure how the road actually got its name, it might be a good idea to heed those warnings and say a little prayer when traveling on Shades of Death Road.

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road sign

Located in Great Meadows, New Jersey, the Shades of Death Road runs through a remote section of the state. It is unknown how it got the bizarre name.

The earliest known tale says the area was once plagued with wildcats that would kill those travelling on the road. The cats were so vicious that, so it's said, the settlers had originally called Petersburg the Cat Hollow and Cat Swamp. A road still exsists by the name of Cat Swamp Road.

Another tale says that it was because of murder that it got its name. As the story goes, the original residents were a boisterous group of squatters. The men would often fight over the women which often led to the killing of one of them. When civilization moved in they left but the name stayed as a reminder of the evil past.

Along the murder idea states that it used to be called "Shades" because the trees made a tunnel over the road. Due to its dark demeanor many unsolved murders were commited there, so the locals added the rest of the name to the road.

Other say the name is because of the natural deaths that happened there. It runs along an area named Great Meadows, which used to be a large marshy swampland. Because of malaria-carrying insects the residents expected outbreaks every year, and the name came from this gloomy outlook.

How it really got its name may never be known but it would be best to use caution when traversing Shades of Death Road.

Story from Jennifer B.

ghost lake

"There are very haunted woods there, and the road is haunted. A plague killed most of these people in the town, forcing them to lay the dead bodies in the street so some sort of doctor could come pick them up. Some bodies were dumped in Ghost Lake, spreading the plague even more"-Jennifer B.

Story from Matt

"There's a legend of a girl who was murdered one night on that road while walking home. Her ghost asks mororists for rides, and if you do not give her one, you'll die in a car accident that night. A friend of mine was driving down the road when the passengers spotted a girl on the road. The conversation went as follows: Girl: 'Please, could you give me a ride?' Driver: 'I'm sorry! I really can't; the car is full.' Girl: 'You don't understand. You want to give me a ride.' Driver: 'I'm sorry...'

The girl then walked off into the woods. Needless to say, all the occupants were freaked out. They stopped the car there at about two in the morning and waited until dawn before driving home."-Matt, Long Valley, NJ

Story from Margie

"I am from Sussex County and have had many experiences on Shades of Death Road. Although I have personally never seen anything, I have felt like there was someone watching me on that road. It is very hard to explain the feeling, but it is one of uneasiness.

One of the last times I visited the road in the evening, I got very lost in the back roads of Sussex and Warren counties. I grew up there and know the roads like the back of my hand, but for some reason, that evening, I was all turned around and seeing the road signs was a very difficult task. It took nearly three hours for my friends (also Sussex County residents) and me to find our way back to Andover. The feeling I had was so intense that the trip was my last."-Margie

Story from Big C.

"My friends and I went to check out Shades of Death Road. As we were driving, we made a turn onto a gravel road between two cornfields. The tiny road looked very creepy and scary. All of a sudden we saw headlights go on in front of us and begin coming towards us.

We immediately put our car in reverse and began to drive back. (The road was so small that you couldn't turn around.) As we got back onto Shades of Death Road, we sped off, but the truck kept following us. Everbody inside our car had an adrenaline rush, and every time we turned around, the truck was still there. Then all of a sudden it disappeared into nowhere. Shades of Death Road is nothing to mess around with. If you go there, make sure you know how to drive in reverse, just in case you make a wrong turn."-Big C from the Crew

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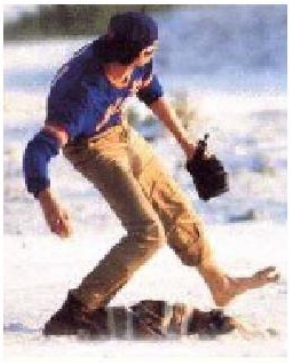

Sidd Finch

In its April 1985 edition, *Sports Illustrated* published an article by George Plimpton that described an incredible rookie baseball player who was training at the Mets camp in St. Petersburg, Florida. The player was named Sidd Finch (Sidd being short for Siddhartha, the Indian mystic in Hermann Hesse's book of the same name). He could reportedly pitch a baseball at 168 mph with pinpoint accuracy. The fastest previous recorded speed for a pitch was 103 mph.

Finch had never played baseball before. He had been raised in an English orphanage before he was adopted by the archaeologist Francis Whyte-Finch who was later killed in an airplane crash in the Dhaulaglri mountain region of Nepal. Finch briefly attended Harvard before he headed to Tibet where he learned the teachings of the "great poet-saint Lama Milaraspa" and mastered "siddhi, namely the yogic mastery of mind-body." Through his Tibetan mind-body mastery, Finch had "learned the art of the pitch."

Finch showed up at the Mets camp in Florida, and so impressed their manager that he was invited to attend training camp. When pitching he looked, in the words of the catcher, "like a pretzel gone loony." Finch frequently wore a hiking boot on his right foot while pitching, his other foot being bare. His speed and power were so great that the catcher would only hear a small sound, "a little pft, pft-boom," before the ball would land in his glove, knocking him two or three feet back. One of the players declared that it was not "humanly possible" to hit Finch's pitches.

Unfortunately for the Mets, Finch had not yet decided whether to commit himself to a career as a baseball player, or to pursue a career as a French Horn player. He told the Mets management that he would let them know his decision on April 1.

Response

Sports Illustrated received almost 2000 letters in response to the article, and it became one of their most famous stories ever. On April 8 they declared that Finch had held a press conference in which he said that he had lost the accuracy needed to throw his fastball and would therefore not be pursuing a career with the Mets. On April 15 they admitted that the story was a hoax.

George Plimpton actually left an obscure hint that the story was a hoax within the article itself (the non-obscure hint being that the story was absurd). The sub-heading of the article read: "He's a pitcher, part yogi and part recluse. Impressively liberated from our opulent life-style, Sidd's deciding about yoga —and his future in baseball." The first letter of each of these words, taken together, spells "H-a-p-p-y A-p-r-i-l F-o-o-l-s D-a-y."

In an odd follow-up, a baseball team in Old Orchard Beach, Maine, after reading the *Sports Illustrated* article, tried to invite Finch to its annual banquet. They received a reply that read, "The challenge is reaching the Eightfold Path of right belief or the ninth inning with the proper relief. May you have peace of mind." They announced that they interpreted the reply to mean that Finch would be attending their banquet. It is not known whether Finch did attend.

- George Plimpton, "The Curious Case of Sidd Finch," *Sports Illustrated*, April 1, 1985, p.59.
- John Freeman, "And now, the star of our show...," *San Diego Union Tribune*, April 15, 1985, D2.
- George Plimpton, "Welcome to the Dynamite Museum," *Esquire*, April, 1991, p.62.
- Fred Fedler, *Media Hoaxes*, Iowa State University Press, 1989, p.201.

Comments

When I was in junior high, my applied arts teacher started asking to borrow strange things. One day it was a baseball mitt, the next it was an French Horn. We respected our teachers way back in the eighties and when he gigglingly refused to tell us what was up, several people I knew leant him what he needed for one day. About a month or so later, our classroom was filled with reporters, and my teacher, whose name I could probably look up somewhere but can't remember, was grinning. And we were all happy to have a day off of making clay renderings of our dream houses. We understood that it was big, but only when a restaurant opened in his alias and we all had plenty of time to read the Sports Illustrated article, did we realize how big. My applied arts teacher was Sidd Finch. And that was my friend Trip's French Horn.

Posted by Leigh on Tue Apr 01, 2003 at 03:54 AM

I happen to be another of the Junior High kids whose shop teacher was the guy who appears in the Sidd Finch photos. If I recall his name was Joe Berton or Bertoncini perhaps. This was at Hawthorne junior high in Oak Park, IL. I remember Joe (Sidd) was helping me make a wooden holder for my Atari joystick. He was a great guy, humorous and lively.

Posted by Tom Morrow in California on Tue Mar 30, 2004 at 11:22 PM

Sid Finch was *not* a hoax! He was the real thing. Major League baseball felt threatened that this could destabalize the game. He was kidnapped by government agents. He is believed to be kept in a secret facility at Area 51, where secret experiments are still being conducted.

Pete Rose is reported to be involved on the project. His ban from baseball is a ruse to cover his participation.

Posted by Tom Rialla in Kansasville, Kansas on Wed Mar 31, 2004 at 02:05 PM

Sidd Finch may have been a hoax, but there was a pitcher who did manage to make it up to 108 mph. And this was when he was tired! Estimates are usually placed that he threw somewhere between 110 and 120 mph. His name was Steve Dalkowski, a lefthander from New Britain, CT who played in the Baltimore Orioles system. He would've been amazing if only he could find the strike zone. He was wild, very wild. He once k'd 262 and walked 262 in 170.2 innings. He wasn't wild in the conventional sense (in and out), though. He threw his pitches sometimes up to 20 feet over the plate. He ruined his arm in 1963. Don't believe me?

1. Do a Google search. You'll find lots of info on this guy.
2. He had a baseball card. 1963 Topps #496. The card is shared with Fred Newman, Carl Bouldin, and Jack Smith. I don't know much about Newman, but Bouldin threw in the low- to mid-90's. Then he wrecked his arm. Jack Smith was a junkballer who just never worked out. Won over 100 minor league games, though, mostly in the Dodgers and Braves organizations.
Posted by Anonymous on Tue Jun 15, 2004 at 12:01 AM

Dalkowski I recently discovered, & is real. How fast he was is unknown, though the above comment that estimates (themselves opure guesswork) threw between 115-120 MPH is innacurate. Looking through MANY sites & articles where he is mentioned, the last # commonly mentioned is 110 MPH-some wisely just say 100+.

But there are enough minor & major leaguers, inc. Earl Weaver (who worked w/him patiently, extensively, & pretty successfully) & Ted Williams, sho testify to his unique speed, that I accept he was likely the fastest ever, a genetic freak.
Posted by michael felber in New York City on Mon Aug 01, 2005 at 11:02 PM
For 20 plus years I have been under the impression that the story of Sidd Finch was true. I never saw the April 15th 1985 issue of sports Illustrated that Plimpton had perpetrated a hoax.
The part that had me most baffled was Plimpton stating that Sidd played the French horn every bit as well as both Dennis Brain and Anton Horner. Brain and Horner are considered by most to be the two greatest horn players that ever lived. I played the horn professionally and was in shock when I first read the article in 1985. I had never heard of Sidd Finch nor would I ever hear of him again pertaining to the horn. Now I realize why. I have been had! I am partly relieved yet also saddened.
Posted by anonymous in CA on Fri Dec 30, 2005 at 12:29 AM

Sidd was a great hoax; I remember the story and, a few days later, the revelation.

But Dalkowski was real. Google "fastest pitch ever" and you'll find him mentioned among the likes of Bob Feller, who once claimed to have been clocked at 108 mph. No one knows if that's true, but everyone knew enough not to contradict Feller; he'd throw at the on-deck batter if he didn't like the look on his face.
Posted by AJ in New York on Mon Jul 24, 2006 at 01:57 PM

In 1994, while operating a small driving range and golf course in Fort Worth, Texas I became friends of the cousin of an employee who was a top-shelf amateur golfer. He was also a country boy as plain as a dozen eggs. Some of you may remember Robert Landers who earned his Senior PGA card in 1994. He played in a flannel shirt, blue jeans and tennis shoes. He looked no more like a golf pro than Snuffy Smith.

Why do I post this here? I started calling media, any media, trying to get him some publicity because I knew it would result in some much needed money for my friend. I had called Sports Illustrated several times and could not get anyone to take a call and hear my story. So, I called the next consequitive number I had been given hoping it would be somebody else at the magazine who would listen. It was answered by someone who sounded older than previously, and I asked how long he had been with Sports Illustrated, he said a long time. I

asked, "You remember Sidd Finch?" He said of course, I said, "Would you give me five minutes to tell you a story if I swear to God I know a real one?" He said sure.

Robert finished sixth and earned his card. Sports Illustrated was there and did a feature story in the Feb. '95 issue. Robert got his 15 minutes of fame and I also got to help him sign an endorsement deal with Dickies for over $60, 000.00 More than he ever made in his life.

Turns out Sidd was real after all.
Posted by Steve Champion in Western KY on Thu Sep 21, 2006 at 01:24 AM
Larry Dierker has a spring training story that springs from this. Plimpton had the catchers training to catch Finch by catching baseballs dropped from a helicopter. Larry writes of some player actually trying this, but instead of a baseball, they substituted a grapefruit. When the catcher caught it, it exploded and the catcher, with a face full of hot stickeyness, thought he'd been killed.
Posted by Brad C Dean on Fri Mar 30, 2007 at 01:34 AM
I'll never forget reading that Sidd Finch piece. I was totally taken in. As a Cardinals fan, all I could think was, "Why the damn Mets?"
Posted by Wayne in San Francisco on Sat Mar 31, 2007 at 12:16 PM
I too, bought this story, hook, line and sinker!
And as a Pirates fan, I too, was disturbed that it was The Mets, who lucked out by "getting" him!
I think about this story every April Fools Day! You've left a lasting impression George!
Posted by Bill in Pittsburgh on Sun Apr 01, 2007 at 04:01 PM
It's way cool to see some other people who went to Hawthorne (now Percy Julian). I got to meet the (in)famous Sidd Finch, although sadly I never got to take one of his classes. Still, it was a very cool thing indeed.
Posted by E. Dominick on Sun Apr 29, 2007 at 02:04 AM
if you think the article is a masterful hoax, just think of it's effect on the sales of plimpton's novel the curious case of finch which he published not too long after the SI report. brilliant marketing....will really miss that guy, he was a true protaganist...
Posted by Sunil on Sat Nov 24, 2007 at 07:12 PM
I do remember this great SI story because I too was a Jr Hi student of the infamous Sidd Finch. He was my woodshop teacher. Ironically, I remember the picture with his bare foot and lanky big toe but I don't remember his real name. Mr. Burton maybe. Oh the glory days of Jr. Hi in the early eighties. It's memories make me smile.
Posted by Scott Moffatt in Jacksonville, FL on Wed Apr 02, 2008 at 09:52 AM
actually the sub heading of the article says "happy april fools day a fib" if you just look at the first letter of every word
Posted by James on Fri Apr 04, 2008 at 06:55 PM
I read the story with amazement and couldn't wait to be the first to tell my baseball teammates about this guy! I was going to plan a trip to go to NY to see this guy pitch!!! After I found out it was a hoax, I was relieved that I saved a lot of money! Great story by a great writer! Thanks George!
Posted by Dave Wilson in Summerfield, Florida on Sun Apr 01, 2012 at 06:56 AM

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The flags of six nations have flown over Texas. They are:

Spain (1519-1685; 1690-1821)

France (1685-1690)

Mexico (1821-1836)

Republic of Texas (1836-1845)

Confederate States of America (1861-1865)

United States of America (1845-1861; 1865-)

Over the years, there has been debate concerning the specific flags to be used as the official Six Flags of Texas. While the flag designs of the United States, Texas and Mexico are well established, there has been variation in the selection of the Spanish, French, and Confederate flag designs. Adopted in 1996 by the Texas Historical Commission, the approved standard designs for the Six Flags of Texas were published in the June 20, 1997 issue of the Texas Register. (22 Texas Register 5959-5967) The standard designs for the flags are as follows: the March 8, 1793 Spanish flag, the circa 1643 French flag, the April 1823 Mexican flag, the March 4, 1861 Confederate Stars and Bars flag and the current versions of the U.S. and Texas flags. Color representations may be viewed in the Six Flags Over Texas report available on the Texas Historical Commission's Web site.

Spain

There are two versions of the Spanish flag which are frequently seen in a display of the Six Flags. Both designs incorporate the heraldic emblems of Leon and Castile, the lion and castle, but differ in their arrangement.

In 1936, the Texas Centennial Exposition chose to use a flag based on the banner which was carried by Cortez during the conquest of Mexico. The flag was:

> "Red damask, double faced, equally divided into four squares, carrying the emblems of Castile and Leon. The upper left square next to the staff and the lower right carry the castle with three ramparts. The lower left and the upper right carry the rampant Lion, without the crown usually seen, in a smaller center field of white. The lion is red. The reverse side pictures the Holy Virgin Mary with hands folded. (For Exposition purposes, the flag will not carry out this part of the description.) "
>
> From "Why the Six Flags of Texas?" Texas Centennial Review, February 19, 1936, page 3.

This flag is still sometimes used as one of the Six Flags. However, the Spanish flag in use after 1785 is now more commonly seen. This red and yellow striped flag depicts a lion of Leon and a castle of Castile on a shield surmounted by a crown.

France

In 1684, Rene Robert Cavelier Sieur de La Salle attempted to establish a French colony on the Texas coast. The venture was unsuccessful, and by 1690 Fort St. Louis had been abandoned. In the 1680s, there was not one official French flag; a number of different designs were in use, and it is not clear which La Salle's expedition might have carried. Some patterns which have been used in Texas include a white banner with three gold fleur-de-lis, a blue banner with three gold or white fleur-de-lis and a white banner liberally sprinkled with gold fleur-de-lis. For the Centennial Exposition, the white flag sprinkled with gold fleur-de-lis was adopted as the most likely design, and this pattern is most commonly seen today.

The Confederate States of America

Between 1861 and 1865, the Confederate States of America had three national flags, as well as naval ensigns and battle flags.

The first national flag, the Stars and Bars, is the flag most commonly used in the Six Flags of Texas today. It was adopted by the provisional government, and first raised in Montgomery, Alabama on March 4, 1861. As adopted, the Stars and Bars has a blue field with a circle of seven stars, and three horizontal stripes -- red, white and red. It was originally intended that stars would be added as states joined the Confederacy, but the version with just seven stars remained common in Texas, which was the seventh state to join the Confederacy. Texans sometimes modified this flag design by arranging six stars in a circle, with a seventh star in the middle of the circle. This version can been seen in the drawing of the reverse of the state seal on the Secretary of State's Web site.

This flag was used as the Confederate flag until May 1, 1863. However, the strong resemblance between the Stars and Bars and the United States flag created confusion on the battlefield, so a variety of battle flags were substituted. The most famous of these battle flags is the one originally used by the Army of Northern Virginia. It was a square with a red ground, marked with a blue saltire bordered with white and with a white five-pointed star for each of the Confederate states. A rectangular version of this flag was used as the naval jack.

Although Confederate troops used a number of other battle flags, this flag was one of most popular and widely used. According to the Handbook of Texas Online article on Flags of Texas, in 1906, the United Confederate Veterans designated the battle flag of the army of Northern Virginia the flag for use by veterans organizations. Because of its popularity and wide recognition, this flag was sometimes used in Six Flags displays. However, in 1936 the Texas Centennial Exposition opted to use the Star and Bars and the use of the battle flag as one of the Six Flags has declined.

The battle flag design was incorporated into both the second and third national flags of the Confederacy. The second flag, know as the Stainless Banner, flew from May 1, 1863 until

March 4, 1865 and was a white banner with the battle flag in the upper corner near the pole. In March of 1865, the Stainless Banner was modified by the addition of a vertical red stripe. Neither later flag is commonly used in Six Flags displays.

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The Mysterious Skeleton Lake of the Himalayas

May 19, 2014 Brent Swancer
http://mysteriousuniverse.org/2014/05/the-mysterious-skeleton-lake-of-the-himalayas/

Some historical mysteries have lain forgotten for centuries by man, buried by the sands, or snow, of time. Be it the remoteness of the location or the danger involved in reaching it, for whatever reason, these places have kept their mysteries to themselves over the ages, hidden in their dark corners of the world from the outside as time marches on around them. It is often pure accident that saves these historical oddities from eternal obscurity and dredges them into the light for us to finally take a look at One such place lies high in the Himalaya Mountains of the Uttarakh and state of India; a small glacial lake called Roopkund. The lake is located in a remote area of craggy glaciers, rocky chasms, and snow blanketed mountains, at an altitude of 5,209 meters (16,499 feet).

Roopkund

Other than the stark remoteness of the barren, windswept locale, there is not much that is immediately peculiar or special about this lake. It is small, at only 2 meters deep, and typically remains completely frozen over throughout most of the year. One could typically go trekking past this lake and hardly even know it was there. Yet for one month a year, when the snow melts and the ice thaws, it becomes apparent why the lake has gained its other namesake “Skeleton Lake,” for one can peer into the clear water and find hundreds of skeletons peering back.

The ancient skeletons, which are over 1,200 years old and in varying stages of preservation, can be found scattered around the landscape and lurking at the bottom of the lake, visible through the frigid, crystal clear water. It is truly a haunting sight to hike among the majestic peaks and find oneself among this bleak grave of a lake and its numerous skeletons strewn about, like some open air, forgotten tomb.

Although whispered about in rumors from as early as the 19th century, the official discovery of this gruesome, skeleton filled lake in the middle of nowhere was made by chance in 1942 by a British game

reserve ranger, who stumbled across it while conducting a survey. During that summer, the ranger came across the thawed lake and went to investigate it, only to make the horrifying discovery of over two hundred human skeletons lying at the bottom, floating through the water, and strewn about haphazardly among the rocky shores.

Roopkund during the summer.

The puzzling discovery of a skeleton filled lake nestled away in the Himalayas far from any human settlement immediately captured the public's imagination. People scrambled to come up with theories as to how all of these enigmatic skeletal remains had ended up in such a cold, remote place and as to what their identities were.

One of the earliest ideas put forward was that the skeletons were the remains of missing Japanese soldiers from World War II who had died from the harsh conditions while trying to sneak across that route through the mountains. This theory was later discounted by an expedition sent by a British government spooked at the idea of a possible land invasion, as the bones were determined to be too old to date from that period, and had merely been well preserved by the frigid cold. Even so, it was still uncertain just exactly how old the bones were.

Another idea was that the skeletons were the lost remains of the doomed Kashmir warrior Zogawar Singh and his army, who had mysteriously disappeared without a trace while returning from Tibet. Still other theories suggested that it had been groups of religious zealots killed in some sort of ritual group suicide, the result of a battle, or groups of travelers who had succumbed to landslides, avalanches, or disease.

For decades, the skeleton lake of Roopkund baffled scientists and no one was able to shed any light on just what exactly had happened at this far flung icy lake. Many studies of the lake were conducted over the years, including one carried out by the Anthropological Survey of India in the 1950s, yet more questions remained than answers.

It wasn't until 2004 that a major expedition was mounted by National Geographic to try and discover more through thorough DNA testing and scientific investigation. The investigation found that the skeletons, around three hundred of them in total, all dated to around 850 AD, suggesting they had all been from the same group and had all died at the same time. After death, the freezing water and dry, icy conditions had kept the bodies in a state of remarkable preservation for the next 1,200 years. Some grisly remains unearthed in the frozen ground were surprisingly well preserved. These bodies amazingly still had hair, flesh, jewelry, and leather clothing that were shockingly intact.

Furthermore, DNA testing determined that there were two distinct groups represented among the bones, one group of taller people who were all related, and another separate group of shorter local people who are speculated to have been porters or guides. Examination of personal belongings and artifacts at the scene also seemed to suggest that these people had all been on some sort of pilgrimage.

In addition, the expedition found that the skulls all exhibited evidence of similar blunt trauma to the head, which showed that these mysterious people had met a rather violent demise. Closer forensic analysis of the skull fractures revealed that the injuries were caused by some sort of heavy, rounded object. Adding to this mystery was the fact that all of the remains only showed such traumatic injuries to the head and shoulders and nowhere else, as if they had been struck suddenly and violently from above.

These brutal findings all seemed to support some of the earlier theories of death by landslide or weapon, but after compiling all of the data and information they had gathered, researchers came to a rather bizarre conclusion as to how these people had died. It was theorized that the only way so many people could have died so suddenly from such similar injuries at the same time was that they had been caught in the open during a freak hailstorm of immense hailstones that came down with such ferocity that all three hundred pilgrims were pummeled to death.

It was estimated by scientists that in order to cause the injuries observed in the skulls, the hail would have have been around the size of cricket balls, or around 9 inches in diameter. Some have disagreed with these findings, but the scientists have claimed that this is the only plausible, rational explanation given the observable evidence.

In recent years, Roopkund, once so shrouded in mystery, has become rather well-known and is a fairly popular destination for trekkers, who brave a five day ascending trek to reach the icy lake and its grim denizens. Many of these people are thrill seekers there specifically to see the mysterious skeletons, looking for a peak at the macabre.

Trekkers making the journey to Roopkund.

It is said by officials that the increasing number of these trekkers is threatening the integrity of the site as a good number of the skeletons have gone missing, and it is believed that this is the result of curious people taking them home as grisly souvenirs. Authorities have a difficult time policing and preserving the site from such thefts due to the inaccessibility of the lake.

Looking at the skeletons lost in this inhospitable landscape it is easy to find oneself imagining just what happened here all of those centuries ago. What were these people really doing so deep in the mountains all that time ago? Where were they headed? Did they really die of giant hail or is there a chance something else occurred?

If the bones keep getting plucked away at the current rate it seems the mystery of the high altitude frozen lake of Roopkund, which has lasted tucked away here in the mountains for over a thousand years, may very well disappear with them forever.

Source of Ooze Still Unknown

February 25, 2006 | Bob Pool | Times Staff Writer latimes.com

The mystery of this week's downtown Los Angeles oil field leak deepened Friday -- to about 4,000 feet underground.

That's where hot, salty water that continues to bubble up from beneath South Olive Street may be coming from, said petroleum experts who spent a fourth day working to clean up the mess, which closed the busy street and forced residents of a 35-unit apartment house out of their homes for nearly three days.

Hazardous materials workers armed with gas-sniffing gauges continued to monitor the hallways and basement of the 99-year-old Iris Apartments and shovel oily mud from the street into plastic bags, as vacuum trucks pumped thousands of gallons of water from beneath the roadway.

But experts remained uncertain where the water was coming from, said officials of the St. James Oil Corp. and the state's Division of Oil, Gas and Geothermal Resources.

St. James operates a pumping facility two blocks from the apartment building that has 12 producing oil wells and two water-injecting wells that slant out for more than a mile in various directions.

On Monday, one of the injecting wells was pumping high-pressure water into the ground to help extract leftover crude oil when hot, oily water began oozing from the street's pavement and the apartment building's basement.

The flow immediately slowed after Los Angeles firefighters asked oil workers to halt the water injection, which is done to get rid of groundwater that is pumped up along with oil and to help push subterranean petroleum into reservoirs where it can be extracted. But liquid continued to steadily bubble up through cracks in the street and sidewalk.

Dennis Barrial, foreman of St. James' drilling site at 1325 S. Broadway, said workers have begun pulling out pipes from the water injection well to hunt for leaks. None have been found, he said.

Barrial said the oozing water -- which was blackish Monday but a dark green Friday -- could be seeping up naturally from a geologic zone about 4,000 feet underground.

But it also could be coming from a long-dormant Chevron well that may have suddenly come back to life after being abandoned 43 years ago. That well -- plugged with concrete and an old telephone pole -- is beneath a parking lot across South Olive from the apartment house, Barrial said.

"We'd like to open the Chevron well and see if the flow is coming from there," said Rich Baker, district deputy with the Division of Oil and Gas. But the well is under the newly paved parking area, and officials don't want to dig that up until other sources for the ooze are ruled

out.

Baker said St. James had agreed to pay for the cleanup, pending completion of the investigation. If another party is found to be responsible, it would have to assume cleanup costs. If the leak is from a natural cause, the state will cover the cost.

Baker said officials hope to reopen one lane of traffic along South Olive on Monday.

The 130 apartment residents were allowed back in their homes Wednesday afternoon, said Delfina Agustin, whose husband manages the three-story building at 1220 S. Olive St. "There's still some odor, but I feel safe and all the families are back," she said.

Next door at Ready Reproductions Inc., a dozen print-shop employees were back at work Friday.

"It was like a yo-yo. 'You can work. You have to evacuate. You can work. No, you have to evacuate,' " said pressman Henri Glazer. "We lost, like, a day and a half of wages."

Shop owner Gene Reitz said his plant developed cracks in floors and walls from Monday's incident.

"We have the Fire Department in here two or three times a day checking for methane," he said. "We've had a hazmat team in, the DWP, the Department of Fish and Game."

The Department of Fish and Game?

"They were worried about seepage to the ocean and the danger to fish," Reitz said.

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Aurora Cemetery gate.

Aurora, Texas

Aurora Cemetery may contain the most important grave in the world, or it may simply be that historical markers in Texas are more open-minded than those in other states. Whatever the reason, the official plaque outside of this graveyard does mention that it might contain the grave of a pilot of a "spaceship" that crashed nearby on April 17, 1897.

Newspaper accounts at the time reported that the alien craft hit a windmill and was torn to pieces, along with its occupant. A 1986 movie, *Aurora Encounter*, recreates the tale.

Cemetery historical marker.

Everyone agrees that the tombstone, if there ever was one, is gone now, and so there's nothing to see here except the plaque (Though there's a consolation grave marker, if you can find it, for "Loreta The World's Talking Bird"). In 2010 an ad hoc "tombstone" with a UFO scratched into it mysteriously appeared in the cemetery, but it vanished just as mysteriously in 2012.

The historical marker also mentions that Aurora was "struck by epidemic and crop failure and bypassed by the railroad." No connection is made between these calamities and the decomposing body of an ET in the town boneyard, but we suspect that that omission was just to avoid panic -- because historical markers always tell the truth.

The Historical Marker's full text:

Aurora Cemetery

The oldest known graves, here, dating from as early as the 1860s, are those of the Randall and Rowlett families. Finis Dudley Beauchamp (1825-1893), a Confederate veteran from Mississippi, donated the 3-acre site to the newly- formed Aurora Lodge No. 479, A.F. & A.M., in 1877. For many years, this community burial ground was known as Masonic Cemetery. Beauchamp, his wife Caroline (1829-1915), and others in their family. An epidemic which struck the village in 1891 added hundreds of graves to the plot. Called "Spotted Fever" by the settlers, the disease is now thought to be a form of meingitis. Located in Aurora Cemetery is the gravestone of the infant Nellie Burris (1891-1893) with its often-quoted epitaph: "As I was so soon done, I don't know why I was begun." This site is also well-known because of the legend that ***a spaceship crashed nearby in 1897 and the pilot, killed in the crash, was buried here****. Struck by epidemic and crop failure and bypassed by the railroad, the original*

town of Aurora almost disappeared, but the cemetery remains in use with over 800 graves. Veterans of the Civil War, World Wars I and II, and the Korean and Vietnam conflicts are interred here.

Directions:

Aurora Cemetery. US 81/287 in Rhome, exit onto Hwy 114. West 1.5 miles, then south a half-mile on Cemetery Rd. The cemetery and marker (when it hasn't been stolen) are on the left side.

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Spanish village of Castrillo Kill the Jews votes on name change

Stephen Burgen in Barcelona
Monday 14 April 2014

theguardian.com

Mayor of Castrillo Matajudíos has proposed reverting to village's original name, Castrillo Mota de Judios (Castrillo Jews Hill)

The village of Castrillo Matajudíos, in northern Spain. Photograph: castrillomatajudios.es

After living with the name for more than 500 years, the village of Castrillo Matajudíos (Castrillo Kill the Jews) looks set for a change.

This week the 60 residents of the village in northern Spain will vote on a proposal put forward by the mayor, Lorenzo Rodríguez, to revert to what is believed to be its original name, Castrillo Mota de Judios (Castrillo Jews Hill).

It apparently acquired this name in 1035 when Jews fleeing a pogrom in a nearby village took refuge on the hill. "The people of [nearby] Castrojeriz took up arms against the king's emissaries, killed five of them and 66 Jews, while the rest were banished to Castrillo, which became known as the Mota de los Judios," the mayor told the local newspaper Diario de Burgos.

After Jews were expelled from Spain in 1492, "someone wrote that now we're more Christian and decided to change the name from Jews' Hill to Kill the Jews," Rodriguez said, adding that it was important for people to understand "our roots" before reaching a decision on the name.

There is a local tradition in the Castilla León region of drinking *matar judios* – a mix of wine and lemonade – on Good Friday. Matarjudios still exists as a surname, as does the more common Matamoros (Kill the Moors). The patron saint of Spain, Saint James of Compostela, is also known as Saint James the Moorslayer. Legend has it that his disciples brought his relics in a stone boat from the Holy Land to Galicia, in north-west Spain.

This was about 100 years after Muslims conquered Spain. Saint James became the symbol of the Christian reconquest, which lasted 800 years and ended in 1492 with the fall of Granada and the expulsion of Jews. Muslims were expelled shortly afterwards.

As the announcement from Castrillo Matajudíos came during the first days of the Passover holiday, there was no immediate response from Spain's Jewish leadership. But a Jewish American who has lived in Spain for many years but preferred not to be named told the Guardian the debate reflected an entrenched historical antisemitism in Spain.

"Frankly it doesn't surprise me that there's a village called Kill the Jews, though it's pretty disgusting that it's taken them till now to think it might be a good idea to change it. There's a casual racism in Spain that no one here seems to notice but which is quite shocking to an outsider. People say 'he's a bit of a Jew' and stuff like that and no one seems to notice. Plus Spain is in complete denial about its Jewish and Muslim history."

Jews arrived in Spain 2,000 years ago, and until the rise of the Inquisition in the Middle Ages Spain had one of the largest Jewish communities in Europe. They were tolerated by the Romans but persecuted by the Christian Visigoths who conquered Roman Spain. The Visigoths introduced forced conversion as early as the 7th century.

As a result, when the Muslims invaded in 711 they were embraced by the Jews who helped them to drive out their Visigothic oppressors. A period of religious tolerance, unheard of anywhere else in Europe, ensued, with Muslims, Christian and Jews living in relative harmony.

However, the plague that swept across Europe in the 14th century was widely blamed on the Jews and in 1391 there were pogroms in all of Spain's major cities, leading to an exodus and mass conversion to Christianity.

Today there are only about 12,000 Jews in Spain, compared with 290,000 in the UK and 478,000 in France. In 2008 a survey carried out by the Pew Research Centre found Spain to be one of the most antisemitic countries in Europe.

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'Spider-Man' tackles life in Cairo

9 December 2014

bbc.com

Last updated at 06:09 ET

A man dressed as Spider-Man hangs upside down from a rail on the Cairo metro

Hanging out: Even a superhero would struggle with life in Egypt's capital, photographer Hossam Atef says

City life can be hard, but life in the Egyptian capital Cairo would even challenge a superhero, according to two of the city's residents.

Photos of a man in a Spider-Man costume carrying out everyday tasks around the city have now gone viral, Ahram Online reports. They show the comic book character running to catch a bus, negotiating Cairo's crowded streets, and even being mock-mugged. The aim of the stunt was to highlight how difficult life can be in the city, according to photographer Hossam Atef, who runs Antikka Photography. "All Egyptians are superheroes for enduring these difficulties every day," Mr Atef tells the website. Spider-Man "was exhausted" by his time in capital, according to chef Atef Saad, who donned the stretchy suit. In 2013, Cairo was ranked 122 out of 140 cities globally in a liveability study by the Economist Intelligence Unit.

The photo shoot itself proved difficult, as the men were stopped several times by the police demanding to see identity documents. But most people were happy to see Spider-Man wandering the streets in his trademark red and blue suit, the men say. "Children were totally convinced that this was Spider-Man... but older men thought he was one of President Sisi's men who will bring justice to Egypt, and they kept telling him: God bless you," Mr Atef tells the Al-Watan website. "Young people like us, on the other hand, wanted to take selfies with him."

A man dressed as Spider-Man runs for a bus

Running for the bus is an experience shared by city-dwellers around the world

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Squeezing Blood From a Grain of Rice?

By Nov. 02, 20110

hl_rice_1101

Getty Images

Billions of people rely on rice as a staple crop. Now here's another reason to grow it: scientists have figured out a way to use the grain to produce a key component of human blood.

The blood protein is called human serum albumin, or HSA, which is normally produced by the liver and helps ferry hormones, steroids and fatty acids in the bloodstream. HSA is also used in drug and vaccine production, and to treat patients in hemorrhagic shock or with serious burns, cirrhosis or other conditions.

The HSA used for therapeutic purposes is largely harvested the conventional way, from human blood donations. But that doesn't produce nearly enough HSA to meet the yearly global demand, which exceeds 500 tons per year. Hence, the efforts to grow the protein another way.

Scientists have been using plants like potatoes and tobacco to produce HSA for two decades, but the yield has been low. So researchers in China, where health officials have struggled with contaminated blood supplies and HSA shortages, decided to try rice. Rice seeds have already been useful for making other human proteins, including lysozyme and lactoferrin, which are found in breast milk, saliva and other bodily fluids.

MORE: A Superbug Toxin Could Help Fight Infection

Led by Daichang Yang, a plant biotechnologist at Wuhan University in China, scientists successfully used bacteria to insert the HSA gene into *Oryza sativa* rice plants. *Nature News* reported:

> Yang and his colleagues inserted the gene encoding HSA into their rice plants in such a way that the gene was activated during seed production, and the resulting protein was stored in the rice grain along with nutrients normally used to help nurture a germinating embryo. The final product was a crop of rice seeds in which HSA made up more than 10% of the seeds' total soluble protein — one of the best yields of recombinant protein from plants to date. …
>
> The rice-derived protein was shown to be functionally equivalent to the version found in human blood plasma. Not only were the two chemically and physically identical, but they were also similar when tested for medical efficacy and immune reactivity. In rats with liver disease, both types of HSA proved equally effective in

relieving symptoms associated with cirrhosis. And rats that were given rice-derived HSA showed no stronger immune reaction than animals that had been given the plasma-derived version.

The researchers said they were able to extract HSA from rice efficiently, reporting that they got 2.75 g of HSA from every kilogram of brown rice — a sufficient yield to scale up the process for commercial production, they said. If it works, using rice to make HSA could be not only cost efficient, but also safer than extracting it from plasma, since it would not be vulnerable to the infections that can be transmitted by blood.

Next, lead researcher Yang hopes to test the rice-derived protein in humans. He's submitted an application to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for a clinical trial.

The new study was published online Monday by the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.*

Meredith Melnick is a reporter at TIME*. Find her on Twitter at @MeredithCM. You can also continue the discussion on* TIME's *Facebook page and on Twitter at @TIME.*

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Squirrel cuts power to 2,000 Cupertino residents

Updated 9:43 am, Sunday, November 23, 2014 sfgate.com

A squirrel that interfered with PG&E's electrical equipment caused nearly 2,000 customers in Cupertino to lose power Saturday morning.

The electricity was out for less than two hours and power was restored at around 8:30 a.m., said PG&E spokeswoman Jana Morris. Places affected included Miller Avenue, Greenwood Court, Atherton Avenue, Candlewood Drive, Brookwell Drive, as well as the area around Finch Avenue and Stevens Creek Boulevard, Morris said.

As for the squirrel, the animal didn't survive and was electrocuted, Morris said.

"The outage is still under investigation," she added.

Wendy Lee is a San Francisco Chronicle staff writer. E-mail: wlee@sfchronicle.com. Twitter: @thewendylee

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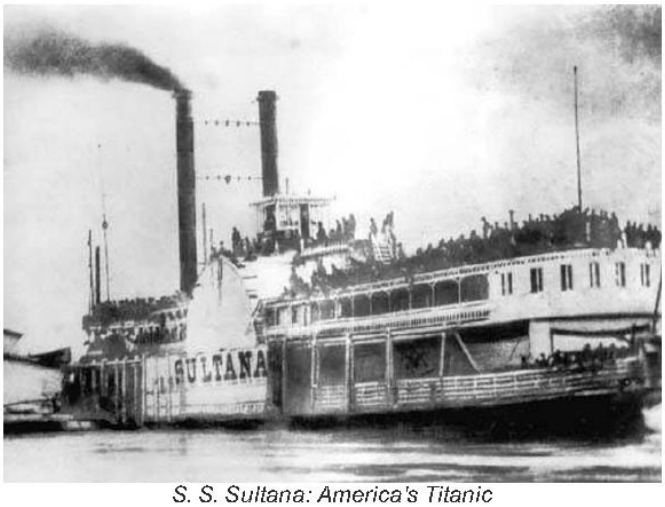
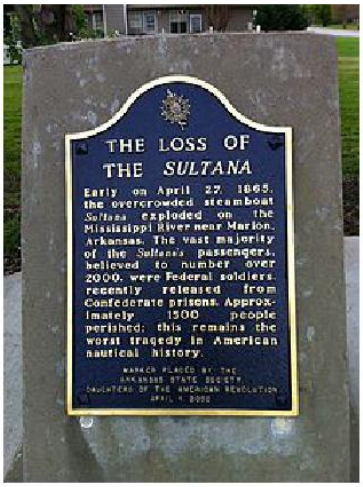
"The steam was so hot I could scarcely breathe. I groped my way out of this place as quick as I could. It took me a moment to realize what had happened. A boiler had blown up. Within a few minutes the ship caught fire. When the crowd fully realized what had happened men began to jump into the water by the hundreds."
-Robert Talkington, 9th Indiana Cavalry



S. S. Sultana: America's Titanic

History has recorded that on April 14, 1865, five days after Confederate General Robert E. Lee's surrender at Appomattox Courthouse to General Ulysses S Grant, the assassin, John Wilkes Booth shot President Abraham Lincoln at Ford's Theater, resulting in the president's death the following morning. A nationwide manhunt began for Booth and his co-conspirators which ended twelve days later at Garrett's Farm when Booth and David Herold were surrounded by members the 16th New York Cavalry. Sergeant Boston Corbett fired a single shot into Garrett's barn hitting Booth in the neck. The shot paralyzed him from the neck down. He died on the porch of Garret's farm in the predawn hours of April 26. During the height of the manhunt for the conspirators, Lincoln's funeral train left Washington, D.C. on April 21, for a 1,600 mile, twelve day journey to the President's final resting place at Oak Ridge Cemetery, in Springfield, Illinois.

The Civil War was over, Lincoln was dead, his assassins were dead or being rounded up and a nation mourned. It is very easy to understand how, amid the swirl of media surrounding the events of April, 1865, that newspapers throughout the nation, and the Americans who read them, missed the sinking of the S.S. Sultana. The largest maritime disaster in U.S. history and the fifth largest in recorded human history.



The S.S. Sultana was a side-wheeled steamship constructed in Cincinnati, Ohio, and launched on January 3, 1863. The U.S. Customs registry listed Sultana at 260 feet long, with a 42 foot beam and weighing 660 tons. Her paddlewheel was 34 feet in diameter and she was outfitted with four 18 feet long newly designed lightweight tubular boilers specially created to give her added horsepower in the strong currents of the Mississippi, Ohio and Tennessee Rivers. Upon her launching from the John Litherbury Shipyard in Cincinnati, the vessel was cleared by Customs to carry a total of 1,000 tons. According to most accounts of the ship, Sultana legally accommodated 376 passengers and crew. Many of the staterooms were very elegant with custom

appointments for first class passenger service. Sultana's design and weight displacement allowed the steamer to draw only 34 to 37 inches of water fully loaded, and made her perfect for passenger and cargo transport in shallow waterways. She was outfitted with the most modern fire safety equipment available, including high pressure fire hoses, multiple fire pumps, fire buckets and fire axes. Furthermore, Sultana was outfitted with 76 life rings in the event of water born disaster. The S.S. Sultana was considered to be, by those in the business of river transportation, one of the finest vessels ever built and she was put into service with a regular passenger and cargo schedule between New Orleans and St. Louis.

S.S. Sultana pulled away from the docks at New Orleans the same day that Lincoln's funeral train pulled away from the train station in Washington, D.C., April 21, 1865. The Captain and Ships Master, J.C. Mason was subsequently one of three investors who had purchased Sultana from her original owner in March of 1864. Capt. Mason had made many voyages up and down the Mississippi River and had full faith in the seaworthiness of Sultana but as fate would have it the ships engineer, J.W. Kennison discovered that one of the steamer's boilers began to leak a few hours before arriving at Vicksburg, Mississippi. Instead of replacing the damaged boiler, Captain Mason ordered Master Boilermaker, R.G. Taylor, of Vicksburg, to perform the necessary repairs that would allow him to get Sultana to St. Louis. While the repairs got underway in Vicksburg, Mason began to take on Unions prisoners of war from Confederate POW camps at Camps Fisk, Cahawba and Andersonville, as part of a government contract that he had received. Under the contract, Mason and his partners would receive five dollars for each Union soldier he loaded onto Sultana's decks for the long trip upriver to Illinois and Ohio. It was later reported by a witness on board of the S.S. Sultan; "The ship was grossly overloaded as the great steamer pulled away from the dock at Vicksburg." However, Captain Mason believed that the 2,300 POW's made the vessel look overcrowded but did not believe that she was overloaded. The S.S. Sultana steamed away from Vicksburg at 9 p.m. on April 24 with 2,400 passengers and crew, 20 tons of sugar and approximately 40 head of livestock. Although the big ship appeared to be struggling, she lumbered her way up the Mississippi River.

S. S. Sultana Tragedy

On the night of April 26, Sultana pulled into Memphis to unload some of her 20 tons of sugar. Once released from the dock, Capt. Mason steamed to the Arkansas side of the river to take on additional coal for the next leg of Sultana's trip up the Mississippi to St. Louis. After departing at around midnight, the Union soldiers who had helped unload the sugar and load the coal sought out small spaces on the already overcrowded deck in which to lie down and sleep. At 2 a.m., about seven miles upriver from Memphis, tragedy struck when two of Sultana's four boilers exploded. The shrapnel from the explosion caused the other two boilers to explode as well, sending a rush of steam, fire, boiler

shrapnel and fiery debris over the ship. The scene was chaos.

"... but I was sleeping soundly again, when, I was suddenly awakened by the hot cinders flying in my face, and starting up, found the blankets we had thrown over us to be on fire. So deep had been my sleep that I had not heard the report of the bursting boiler which has been described as a sound which seemed to be the groans of the world being rent in twain. Timbers were flying in every direction together with the remnants of the boiler, and fire raged on the shattered vessel. What should we do? To stay on board meant to be burned to death for every moment the flames were gaining headway. And surely to leap into the depths of a river which having burst its levees, had spread its water over a breadth of five miles, could mean no less than death.

Some already were leaping into the water and I tried to decide which course to pursue or which kind of death to choose, the flames were coming closer and closer; now almost all had abandoned the vessel. Seizing a stick of wood, I jumped off into the water."

Several times was I pulled under water by others drowning and, finding that the wood could not aid me and spying a cable chain, I grasped the latter as a last means of hope. Holding firmly to this with my hands, and catching my toes in the lower links, I managed to keep my head above the water. My hands soon became so stiff that I could not hold to the chain that way, so I clung to it with my arms. As I hung there, fearing every moment to lose my hold and drop into eternity, as I heard the cries of the drowning and felt that their fate would soon be mine....."

"The cries of the drowning were pitiful -- heart rending. Those of one Irishman I can never forget. His face had been terribly crushed by the flying missiles, his nose being entirely split open. Still he managed to keep his head above water and when someone said that a boat was coming to our rescue, he cried out again and again, '0 the Lord's a good Lord, we'll all be saved.' But, alas, we could not all be saved at once; and after gathering up a load of the wounded and drowning, the boat pulled away and we saw it no more."

"I hung there, with body grown numb through exhaustion, until seven o'clock In the morning, when the citizens from the Arkansas side of the river came with a raft to our rescue. I was perfectly helpless when taken out of the water and it was only by the aid of brandy and skillful hands that I was brought to life. The poor Irishman, I learned, did not live but a short time after our rescue. Afterwards we were taken back to Memphis to the hospital and I lay there until the second evening after our arrival, seeing not one face of the eight of my company who had started on the boat, and thinking that they were all lost except myself."

"Over 1,700 of the noble boys lost their lives on that terrible night."
- Uriah Mavity, 40th Indiana

At about 3 a.m. the southbound steamer Bostonian happened upon the burning Sultana, which had drifted to the western bank of the Mississippi River and was sinking into a shallow mud bank. Passengers were clinging to trees along both shores of the river as well as floating on debris from the ship. The Captain of the Bostonian steadied the steamer as passengers and crew began to pull survivors from the frigid waters. It was then that the loss of life from

the explosion and fire became evident to the rescuers. The explosion had been heard seven miles away in Memphis and the northbound steamer Arkansas, which had just left the dock at Memphis when the explosion occurred, was searching for the source of the fire and smoke as she steamed up the Mississippi. Within minutes of the arrival of the Bostonian, other boats began to arrive on the scene and would continue to join the rescue effort until well after 8 a.m. The task of pulling survivors and the dead was daunting. Rescuers noted that many of the survivors and the dead had suffered severe burns in the blast. Many of the victims that had survived the initial blast without injury fell victim to hypothermia and drowning.

In the aftermath of the explosion and sinking of Sultana, the injured passengers and survivors were taken downriver to Memphis and the task of removing the dead from the river began. Several investigations ensued. The U.S. Customs and Department of the Army's investigations cited several causes for the disaster including Captain Mason's overloading the vessel, a catastrophic failure of the repaired boiler and "mismanagement of water levels within one, if not several of the boilers". Capt. Mason, whose body was found by the searchers, was not held personally responsible for the disaster, however, Captain Fredrick Speed, the assistant Adjutant General of the Department of the Mississippi and the officer in charge of transportation for the POW's was charged with negligence in the overloading of the vessel. Furthermore, the U.S. Custom's death total from the accident was listed as 1547, a count that did not include passengers who were listed as missing by other passengers. Those reports, coupled with the U.S. Customs official report take the death toll closer to 1700 lives lost.

The survivors of the S.S. Sultana disaster began to meet for a reunion for the first time in 1867. The survivors had a lot to discuss in the 1912 reunion, held in Knoxville, for the R.M.S. Titanic had sank 15 days earlier, killing 1,502 souls. The last reunion was held in 1930, in which only one survivor showed. It was 65 years to the day of the disaster.

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Missing Bridge Recovered

huffingtonpost.com

AP Posted: 12/04/2014 12:14 pm EST Updated: 12/05/2014 9:59 am EST

AP

FARMINGTON HILLS, Mich. (AP) — A Michigan man says his family's 5,000-pound footbridge has been recovered after being stolen from his property in suburban Detroit.

Robert Cortis filed a police report Wednesday saying that a 40-foot bridge made of steel and wood was stolen from his property in Farmington Hills.

Cortis says he discovered the bridge was missing when he stopped by his property near 8 Mile Road with plans to move the bridge this week. He planned to set it up at his catering business for taking wedding photos.

Cortis says the bridge has sentimental value because his father built it decades ago.

The Detroit News says police on Thursday found the bridge undamaged in Belleville, about 20 miles south of where it disappeared. There's no word of suspects.

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Submarine Shelling of Ellwood Oil Field in 1942

By Vic Cox (Contact)
5:00 PM

independent.com

Less than three months after the Imperial Japanese Navy attack on Pearl Harbor plunged the United States into World War II, a Goleta oil field became an early, and unexpected, target in that horrendous conflict.

February 23, 2012, will mark 70 years since a large Japanese submarine, identified as the *I-17*, surfaced at sundown off Ellwood Mesa and fired its deck cannon at the tidelands oil-production facilities clustered along the shore. Aerial photos from the time show more than a dozen piers anchored to what is now Haskell's Beach.

Given eyewitness reports that the sub was within a mile of shore, and the profusion of oil storage tanks, piers, and pump houses, the damage was remarkably minimal: an estimated $500 worth of splintered railing, cracked equipment housing, pier planking, and shrapnel-punched doors. Duration of the attack was estimated to be around 20 minutes, though the vessel was sighted in the Santa Barbara Channel an hour after the attack began.

The Ellwood shelling was, in the words of Kenneth Hough, a PhD candidate in UC Santa Barbara's History Department, "deliberate, almost leisurely." It was also said to be the first attack on the U.S. mainland by a hostile nation since the sack of Washington, D.C., in the War of 1812.

Well, maybe not. As part of Hough's research into Americans' fears regarding Japan in the pre-World War II era, he unearthed earlier incidents of brief military attacks on the U.S. One was a border incursion during the Mexican-American War of 1846 and the other a submarine attack on a barge in a Cape Cod harbor in 1918 during WWI.

However, the event was, as the *Santa Barbara News-Press* headlined on February 24, 1942, the "First Attack of War on Continental U.S." Fortunately the raid produced no human casualties, though one soldier was injured trying to defuse one of the "dud" shells.

While facts are hard to pin down — even the number of cannon shots varies widely — myths and speculation seem to cling to the Ellwood shelling like burrs to a hiker. Some claimed that signal lights had been seen in the Goleta foothills before and after the attack; others, at least initially, thought the inept shelling a hoax staged by the American government to rally citizens behind the war effort and to sell bonds.

One persistent story is that the sub's commander, Kozo Nishino, targeted Ellwood to avenge a loss of face he allegedly suffered at the hands of oil workers when he captained an oil tanker that loaded at pre-war Ellwood. That linkage is suspect, to say the least.

The earliest version of this "revenge" motive I've found is in *Santa Barbara's Royal Rancho*, published in 1960 by the late S.B.-area historian Walker Tompkins; it has been repeated elsewhere. However, in 1993, military historian Harvey Beigel reported that the *I-17* was originally ordered to wage terror attacks on West Coast population centers.

Nishino found San Francisco and San Diego "too well defended and so he chose the Ellwood oil fields," Beigel wrote. The *I-17*'s poor gunnery was likely due to the crew's haste and what the author termed the deck gun's inadequate range-finding and targeting mechanisms.

Santa Barbara-area historians, such as Tompkins and Justin Ruhge, should be credited for laying the groundwork, but as researchers expose new information, skeptics like Hough need to be heard. A good example of fear clouding the facts were the reports of "signal lights" from a supposed fifth column of Japanese agents guiding the *I-17*'s attack.

Though naval intelligence did find activity by so-called "Japanese war societies" in Santa Maria and Lompoc, no connection to the *I-17* attack was ever made, according to a 1965 letter to Tompkins from the Santa Barbara-based Navy liaison. A better explanation of any strange lights above Ellwood came in a 1988 article written by J.J. Hollister III about his illustrious family for the Santa Barbara Historical Society.

In it, Hollister disclosed for the first time that his father, John James Jr., had taken the family van from their Winchester Canyon home to investigate the flashes and booms at sea that night. Due to blackout requirements only the parking lights were on as the vehicle slowly traversed the rough road's many dips and turns. From far below, the sporadically seen lights could seem to be signals.

"Thus it was that Jack Hollister contributed in a small way to the groundswell of rumor and fright," Hollister wrote, "that resulted in President Roosevelt signing an executive order … that forcibly removed some 117,000 Japanese from their homes to inland detention camps." Most of these people were American citizens.

Myths and how they come to be are of interest to historians, and they should be to journalists who may be the first to disseminate them. The Ellwood shelling, moreover, demonstrates how some myths can cloak deeper cultural attitudes that may lead to damaging actions.

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Swastikas Found On Hanukkah Wrapping Paper

International Business Times msn.com

© Provided by IBT US swastika-wrapping-paper

When Cheryl Shapiro visited the holiday aisle at her local Walgreens in Los Angeles over the weekend, she was shocked to spot Hanukkah wrapping paper with a geometric border design that had a swastika shape in it. Shopping with her grandson at the time, Shapiro alerted the store's manager, who promptly removed the gift wrap, and at least one other Walgreens in the area has done the same.

"I told them I wanted this taken off the shelves immediately -- not just your store, but national," Shapiro, who is Jewish, told NBC LA. "I was really putting my foot down because I was appalled by this."

Walgreens pulls Hannukah wrapping paper due to unforeseen swastikas http://t.co/vAElhe1CRjpic.twitter.com/SII8xjS8Xb

— Seth Palmer (@sethpalmer3) December 8, 2014

Walgreens spokesman Phil Caruso said the company would remove the rolls from shelves. He did not provide an estimate on how many rolls of the wrapping paper the major drugstore chain sells.

"I saw it immediately. I think I have a good eye," Shapiro told KABC, adding that she called her rabbi when she returned home. "He couldn't believe it," Shapiro said. "I'm still very upset about it, that something like this could be on the market."

The swastika appears as a sacred or decorative element in various cultures, but the Nazis' use of it during the Holocaust makes it anathema to Jews.

While some are as outraged as Shapiro was about her discovery, others say she was overreacting.

"This is not a swastika. In art/design/history this is called a 'meander' and it was common in Ancient Greece," redditor NotCohen wrote about the design. Redditor sRazors96 said the pattern "looks similar to the Golden Dawn's logo," referring to the emblem of Greece's far-

right political party, which has been described as neo-Nazi.

This isn't the first time swastikas have been spotted on holiday wrapping paper. In November 2009, an Orlando woman spotted the Nazi symbol on wrapping paper bought at a Dollar Mania store. At first, she did not notice the symbol, but then it struck her when she started wrapping her presents.

"I asked myself, is it really what I think it is? Am I making something out of nothing?" Casey Lehman told WESH 2 at the time. It turns out the pattern was an ancient Sanskrit symbol from Hinduism that means good luck. Still, not everyone will see it that way.

"If I had sent this out on my Christmas gifts and someone had pointed it out to me, I would have been mortified. I would have been really embarrassed," Lehman said.

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Tales and Legends of Český Krumlov Castle

Castle No. 57 - Salt-house

It was believed that the house was haunted. Sometimes the people who lived there didn\'t have any peaceful nights at all, this being the fault of two men which had once guarded salt. They were passing the tedious duty by playing dice, and while one of them was winning hands down the other was having awful luck. He was seized by anger and wanted to get his own back. During the fierce fight, both enraged men fought to the death. Even nowadays, noises of a fight, heated voices, and the sighs of dying guards can be heard.

Castle No. 65 - Brewery

In this house an odd knocking can often be heard at nights as if a coppersmith was knocking on hoops. According to the story, a faithful coppersmith had to get himself some reed from the castle pond to seal the barrels. Through an unfortunate accident he fell out of the boat and drowned, so he couldn\'t fulfill the task he had undertaken. Not even after his death could the coppersmith rest in peace, and during full moons he haunts the workshop of the brewery, trying to complete his work.

Castle No. 59 - Dairy

These rooms served as a large woodshed where wood for the castle administration was stored. The domestic staff hated to go fetch wood in the evening or at night because it was said to be a very dangerous place. It was thought that somebody had been murdered there and his soul was very deceitful. It caused people a lot of trouble. Once the woodpile nearly fell down on a servant who luckily jumped aside.

Cellars in the IVth Courtyard of Český Krumlov Castle

Old wine was buried and stored in these cellars. It is said that the Rosenberg butler was so assiduous that he looked after the wine even after his death. He always offered useful advice to his successors and helped them to find wine of a delightful taste and aroma. However, he was not only a good-natured man but was capable of being mischievous as well.

Masquerade Hall

With the Masquerade Hall, a story is told about a servant who, during the whirl of the ball, spotted a string of pearls slipping off a beautiful lady\'s neck without her noticing it. He wanted to keep the necklace. His malicious intent was foiled by the figures of grenadiers painted on the wall which stepped out of the wall and prevented him from completing his immoral deed. The frightened servant gave the necklace back to the lady and from then on was an honest man.

Castle Theatre in Český Krumlov

Evelyna, a beautiful virgin, played in a visiting drama group. She fell in love with a leading

Český Krumlov Castle, view from the northern side - the magical atmosphere of early evening…, foto: Zdena Flašková

Vincent Neumann, picture of a Witch on a broom, end of the 19th century

man called David, but unfortunately the love was unrequited. During the last act of the play poor Evelyna stabbed herself in the chest and died on the stage. It was impossible to wash the blood off the boards, and for a long time the stain was a reminder of the unhappy day.

Summer - house Bellarie

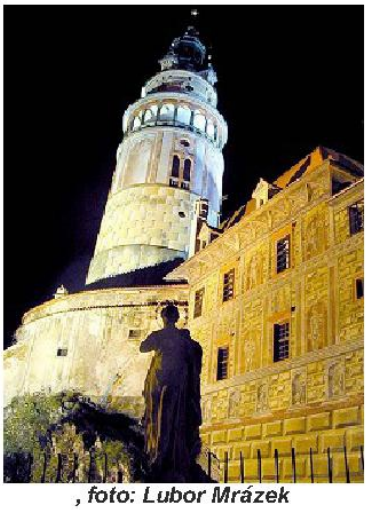
When the construction of the Summer Manor Bellarie was completed an unhappy accident happened as early as the first party. One of the ladies had a headache during the whole evening. She took someone\'s advice to drink a full goblet of red wine at one go. Afterwards, she collapsed in a faint and never came to again. Each time a party took place in the Summer Manor afterwards, an unknown lady with a high hairstyle wearing a red Rococo dress would suddenly appear among the guests. She vanished before the end of the party just as mysteriously as she appeared. People used to call her the enigmatic Rococo lady.

Small Lake in Castle Gardens in Český Krumlov

This small lake is associated with impressive fairy tales about naiads dancing in the moonlight. It is even believed that on the small island is a buried treasure which is guarded by naiads and dwarfs. If they take a liking to someone, they give him part of the treasure. However, the story does mention a magic good word. The person who puzzles the magic out will get the treasure. It is known that many people have already tried to get the treasure, but neither naiads nor dwarfs have appeared.

The White Lady von Rosenberg

Perchta von Rosenberg, known as the White Lady, lived in the Český Krumlov castle in the 15th century. Her father, Ulrich II. von Rosenberg married her off against her will and without love to the Moravian lord Johann von Lichtenstein who was cruel to Perchta all her life. When Johann was dying he had Perchta called in and asked her for forgiveness. She refused, and her husband cursed her. Since then, the soul of the White Lady von Rosenberg has had to roam the Rosenberg castles and tends to appear before significant events. White gloves on her hand bear good tidings, whereas black gloves are a sign of impending disaster. Tales of the White Lady is a theme for many authors.



, foto: Lubor Mrázek

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About Latrán and the Founding of the Krumlov Castle

Perchta von Rosenberg, portrait

In the days of the dark Middle Ages, when on the site of today's Český Krumlov was neither town nor castle, a dark and deep forest covered the Vltava River valley. It was through this very forest that a trade route led from Austria to the Czech inland. On the rock cliffs above the river ford, there in the forest, a band of thieves and robbers, in short looters (lotři) had their lair, and attacked and robbed every travelling merchant's wagon which was passing through the woody countryside. One day, of course, the robbers' time came, because the heroic knight Vítek discovered the hideout and burned it to the ground. He then built an invincible castle Krumlov which was to forever guard the ford across the Vltava. And the longest street in the town which arose alongside and below the castle was named in memory of the looters - Latrán. History, of course, names this street in a much more practical manner, as it took its name from the Latin word Latus (side, lateral), indicating the side street along the castle and leading to the old town.

A legend about the stone brothers

Near Český Krumlov on a cross of two field paths stood two sculptures. Both sculptures looked very much alike, and so people called them the stone brothers. Pilgrims used to come to them from far away. Because too many people used to meet at these sculptures, a town council decided to removed them. Two deep holes remained at the placed where the sculptures were dug out and nobody was able to back-fill them. Both sculptures were placed in a shed. Very strange light and strange voices came out of this shed each night. A steward got worried and he rose the sculptures again - one of them was placed in the centre of his farm and the second one in Trinity forest. And again many people came to them but as many people came to these sculptures, less of them came to a pilgrimage place Kájov. And again the sculptures had to be removed. By order of a consistory of České Budějovice two men carried both sculptures covered with a cloth away on a wagon. Everywhere they passed the bells of chapels and churches rang on their own. All signs of this strange yoke disappeared in České Budějovice.

A legend about a prelate and the devil

When a rich citizen of Český Krumlov Gruntherer, who became rich almost overnight so much that he did not know what to do with his money, aged, he began to have restless nights. He told his wife that he had sold his soul to the devil for all the money. The worried woman ran for advice to the prelate of Český Krumlov. This powerful man who was able to lay the ghosts and devils called the devil with a single word and began to read a paper that had been signed by the rich man's blood some years earlier. And suddenly the prelate found out that the devil had given him the paper of a different wealthy citizen of Český Krumlov. So he used an even more powerful magic formula and the devil had to fetch the right paper. The

Rainbow above Český Krumlov Castle, foto: Libor Sváček

times at night. Long time ago a smith lived there. He loved his work so much that he could not imagine selling it away. When a customer came to pick up his lattice made according his own design, the smith did not want to give it to him. A short time after he went mad and demolished the lattice and the whole smithy. He died and his family moved away. Everybody who lived in this house complained of the strange noise coming from the cellars where the smithy used to be.

Latrán No. 33, Dobrkovická street
A so-called "ballroom of the Rosenbergs" used to be in this house. Ball games were played here and many stories are connected with this place.

Latrán No. 50
Even though it is not kept in order, the area of the former Minorite monastery has remained very nice even today. The space in front of the church, called Tramín, used to be a cemetery. A monastery corridor became a place of the last rest of many citizens of Český Krumlov who paid for their place when they were alive. A girl called Judita is also buried here. She was a courtesan but she gave her dirty money to the churches and to charity. This is the reason why she was buried here.

An alchemist Antonín Michael z Ebbersbachu is also buried here. He was looking for gold and elixir of youth and life, but in fact he took advantage of the magnates who wanted to have an alchemist at their courts.

Also don Julius de Austria has his tomb here. He was a bastard son of emperor Rudolf II.. He brutally murdered the sixteen-year-old Markéta Pichlerová at the castle. He was buried in a small cloister garden, under a gutter of a chapel of Panna Maria Einsiedelská, the so-called Black Madonna because nobody wanted him to find peace in eternity. The remains of poor Markéta Pichlerová were buried behind a great altar. Once a stone marked with a little cross was put on a place of her last rest. The stone was lost during a renovation of the church floor.

The midnight Advent mass was read in a monastery church of the Holy Body. The mass scared a young girl Anežka, who recognised her neighbours and relatives who had died long ago.

The St. Anna chapel of death was situated in Tramín right on the corner where a big lime tree is today.

Latrán No. 56
A bakery used to be in this house. A legend about a young handsome baker is connected with it. He had many marriage proposals but did not want to get married. He was a very difficult man. Every girl he asked for date he tested in mathematics. The girls were taken by

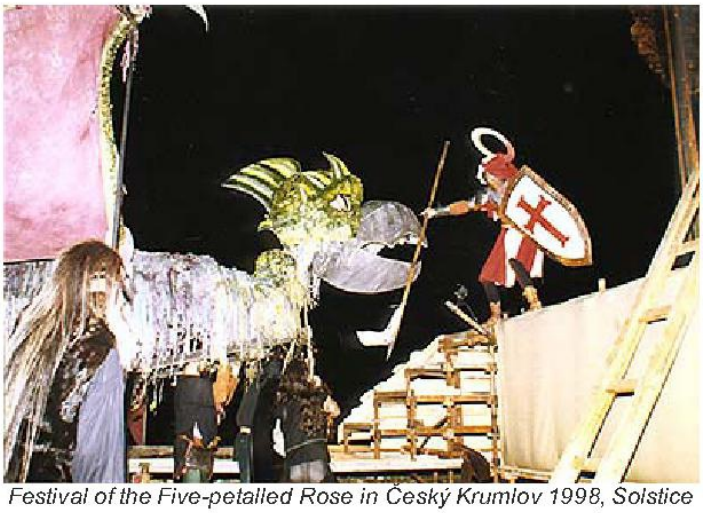
surprise so much that they could not add two and two, so the baker broke off each relationship very soon. He died unmarried.

His sister told many horrible experiences about what was happening above her flat in a corridor leading to the castle. They had a staff needed in bakery in that corridor - big mixing sticks and stirrers, kneading trough, etc. It happened from time to time that all the bakery stuff was scattered all over the place. According to a legend, the nuns of the religious order of St. Claire who ran to the castle to hide themselves against Hussites did it. Many other people heard the running steps of several people. Those who were more courageous saw the figures wearing black monastic robes.

Latrán No. 67

This is area of the St. Claire monastery. A nun, Margareta, who wanted to help ill people lived here at the time of plague in the 16th century. The ill and dying people were always happy to see her and even this brought relief from their suffering. Margareta was able to mix herbs and make the medicines of them. She did her task and people loved her. When she was dying she said she would help the monastery and people after her death, and this really happened. Long after the monastery was abolished the nun Margareta appeared at a bed of ill people and it was a sign that they would be healthy again soon.

But the Clare nun´s monastery also has its own very bad and cruel ghost that appears only on New Year´s Eve. It always carries some member of a family and it is a sign who will die next year. Unfortunately, its prediction was several times fulfilled.



Festival of the Five-petalled Rose in Český Krumlov 1998, Solstice ceremony on the Castle terraces, St. George fighting the dragon

A monk appears from time to time in the loft of a monastery and also in the loft of the monastery next door. He hanged himself there because he had fallen in love with a beautiful nun who worked in monastery as a portress. He had to work with her when they divided food for both monasteries. Once another nun came to help him and she falsely told him that his nun had died. He could not cope with his loss and he hanged himself in the loft. Some occupiers saw the monk walking here and there with a rope around his neck. People say that the nun jumped into a monastery well when she heard about his death.

(hb)

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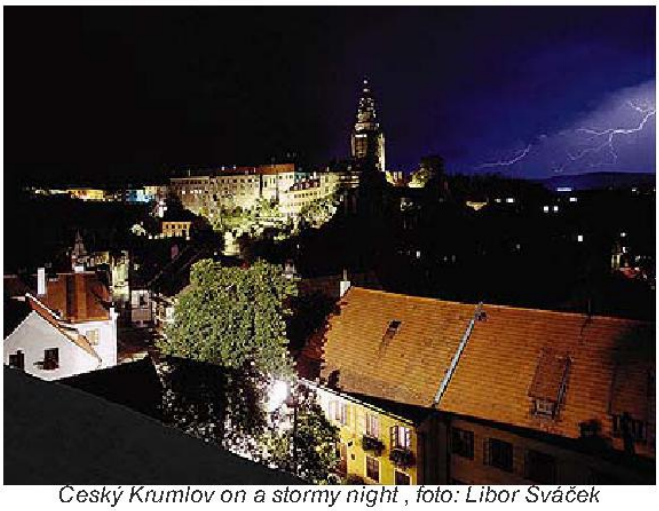
prelate burnt both papers and he saved the souls of the both wealthy citizens from the fires of hell.

Tales and legends about some places and buildings in Český Krumlov:

Náměstí Svornosti - the plague pillar (Fountain in the Square in Český Krumlov)
Many times a fire flashed up in this place and the lives of many women who were accused of witchcraft were ended there. The story of one gypsy girl was one of the most horrible - the girl let herself be locked in a church in Kájov and she stole a ring from the Holy Virgin. The very next day a parish clerk accused her of sacrilege. She gave the ring back, but the Jesuits from Český Krumlov came to hear of that. Although she was set free by the vicarage in Kájov, the Jesuits caught her, tortured her and she confessed to things she hadn't done. She was burnt to death in fire in the square at the plague pillar.

Náměstí Svornosti No. 2
An inn "U Slunce" used to be in this house. The innkeeper Jan was very distrustful of men and did not trust the chief butler in the brewery. He accused him all the time that he gave him only half filled butts and he complained to the brewer in the brewery. Because the brewer did not want the innkeeper to buy beer from somebody else, he discharged the butler from service. The innocent man said a curse and a few days later the innkeeper slipped down the cellar stairs and the butts covered him. His soul can not find peace in eternity, and from time to time it walks around the house.

Náměstí Svornosti No. 9
Once there was an inn "U Anděla" in this house. It was very cheerful place especially at the time of the markets. Once a very strange bet was placed there. Two men bet a recently-purchased cow who could drink two tubs of beer more quickly. The man who won the bet did not enjoy his luck, as he got sick that night and died. The dead man appeared to the innkeeper and reproached him that he did not dissuade him from the bet. The innkeeper had a mass officiated several times for the soul of that dead man in the St. Vitus church to sleep well at night.


Český Krumlov on a stormy night , foto: Libor Sváček

Panská No. 20
According to legend a very bad landlord lived in this house. He had no mercy with his servants. The most horrible thing was that he sold his soul to the devil. The devil gave him power and richness. The time to go to hell came and devil came for the landlord. He was afraid of this time, he bargained with the devil and tried to cheat him. One day he painted crosses on all the doors and windows in the house and he thought he pulled a good one on the devil. Unfortunately he forgot to paint the cross on one small window in the lavatory. The devil

pulled him out of this window so brutally that he flayed his skin off his body. Those awful remains of the landlord's body were on the window for very long time as memento for people not to make any agreement with the devil and not to become addicted to evil. Even today the soul of the evil landlord appears.

Dlouhá No. 31
A restaurant called "Cikánská jizba" is today in this house. Once a businessman lived here whose son Walter fell in tragic love with a beautiful young gypsy girl. The whole town was shocked by this, because the young man was dating a very nice and proper girl Růženka from Český Krumlov. But betrayal was hidden in the heart of the black beauty. Her gypsy fellows from a camp near Český Krumlov poached in a river and fished for pearls, which the gypsy girl then sold to a witch Annabella. One day the gypsies left the camp and unhappy and lonely Walter married Růženka, who was very much in love with him. He never forgot his gypsy girl, her love and passion. He told his great secret to his son.

Dlouhá No. 32
Vlašský yard. A long passage leads from this house to the river. Thanks to this passage, people in town did not suffer from thirst when Český Krumlov was attacked by the enemies.

After World War II, in 1947, much research was done in this house and the passage was immured.

Soukenická No. 35
This house was called "U Baziliška" in the past. Its owner, lady Rozálie, did not heed the advice of a healing woman who told her to kill a black hen. An horrible basilisk came out from hen's first egg. Since then, all members of Rozálie´s family had very bad fortune. Only the owner and her young daughter stayed alive. A witch Annabella told Rozálie what to do to get rid of the bad curse. A young journeyman who looked for bed and breakfast in the house helped Rozálie to remove the basilisk. And when the basilisk died, the person who had said the cruel curse also died.

Soukenická No. 37

Cross on the shore of the Vltava River in Český Krumlov, winter,

Miss Stázička was said to have lived in this house. She was a person who cast a cruel curse on lady Rozálie who lived next door in house no. 35. She did it because of her unhappy love. When Stázička died, many times people could hear grievous cries and sighs coming from one room of the house. They say it happened because this woman never made a clean breast of this sin.

Panenská No. 38
This house had a special function in the past, as so-called fallen girls lived there, girls who sold their love for money. That is why the street was called derisively "panenská" (virginal). Many happy and sad stories happened there. It used to be said that when a girl who has not yet married and has already lost her virginity goes through this street, her face blushes. Some boys took their girls to this

foto: Libor Sváček

street purposely, where they watched their girls very carefully. Nobody knows if this test is valid today.

Soukenická No. 42

A very unhappy young man called Helmut lived in this house. He fell in love with a young girl, and they vowed their lives to each other. But Annabella, a witch from Český Krumlov, managed to break her promise and persuaded her not to marry Helmut. At the end she married an old humpbacked man and left Český Krumlov with him. Helmut could not cope with the situation and he hanged himself. The strange noise could be heard from the loft, and even the beam which Helmut hanged himself on cracked.

Kájovská No. 56

The legends about the mills of Český Krumlov tell that each of those mills had its own patron coming from the water animal kingdom. A river nymph took care of Mrázek´s mill. Many times a white fog hung above the millrace, and contour lines of a woman were visible. The legend says that the nymph was very careful and she did not allow anybody to draw near the mill. Once a little child fell into the Vltava river. His mother said that she saw gentle small hands carrying her child above the water and then to a river bank.

Festival of the Five-petalled Rose in Český Krumlov 1998, Jan Kačer as Wilhelm von Rosenberg

Kájovská No. 68

This house is marked with three legends.

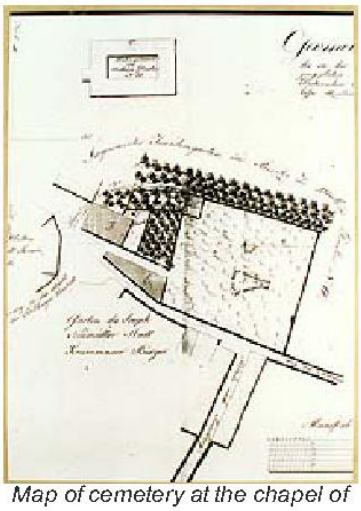
A coppersmith called Hollengammer lived here around 1460. He used to buy old copper from a Jew and he made of it non-decorative goods. Once happened that one piece of copper did not melt in a melting furnace. It was a cross that had been passed down from father to son. In the middle of the 17th century the last descendant of the family, a widow Reikinová, gave the cross to a councillor. At that time the whole region suffered from severe storms and hailing. The councillors decided to place the cross on a top of a hill from where such weather came. Since that time the hill has been called Křížová hora (Mountain of the Cross). But the cross has its origin in this house.

An inn with a stable used to be in this house. The stable man was not a good person and he often tormented horses. Once a visitor put a very nice horse in the stable. The stable man could not wait to harm this horse. But the horse very badly injured him and he died in stable without any help. People could hear very often his cry coming from the stable.

The house had very nice vaulted cellars, but quite dangerous stairs lead to these cellars. They became fatal to a waiter. Just at the moment when he was very happy because he had proposed to his love Klára, he fell down the stairs and broke his neck. Klára, who went crazy, and her lover meet each other from time to time in this house, because their souls can not

find peace in eternity.

Široká No. 77



Map of cemetery at the chapel of St. Martin

A legend tells us that an alchemist who served at the court of last two Rosenbergs - Wilhelm and Peter - lived in this house. His name was Antonín Michael z Ebbersbachu and he passed himself for a famous alchemist and scientist, but he was really only a cheat and impostor. He extracted plenty of gold ducats out of Rosenberg and said that if he would plant and water them with a special solution they would grow and he would have more of them. Then he promised to make an elixir of life and youth. According to legend he was put in jail in the tower and people said that "he pegged out as a dog". But this is not true. He was persecuted but he died in his house. He was buried in a quiet aisle of a minorite monastery as a real aristocrat. He probably did not have a clean conscience because he appears from time to time in the house and he walks here and there and up and down the stairs and sighs a lot.

Široká No. 80

According to legend this mill was protected by a water elf that cared for pearls and pearl shells. Some people called him the "Pearl man". According to the story his suit was decorated with beautiful rainbowlike pearls. From time to time he allowed people to fish for pearls on a small river island. Whoever wanted to find a really big and nice pearl had to ask the elf politely. Whoever did not ask politely, he could not even open a shell or he fell into the river - always something bad happened to him or he lost the pearl.

The second legend tells that an owner of this mill had financial difficulties and even an illness came to this house. The miller´s wife could not carry all those troubles any longer and so she came to the river and sat on its bank. Tears ran down her cheeks. Ssuddenly a pretty little girl appeared in front of her. She caught the miller´s wife´s tears in her little apron and said, "Stop crying. From now everything is going to be all right!" - and the tears changed into pearls. The little girl told the miller´s wife what to do with those pearls and that she must not forget poor people who needed her help. A short time later peace and happiness returned to the mill.

A river bank

The town council and lordship allowed the Wolf family to fish for pearls on this place. A pearl shell called Margarita margaritana lived in the Vltava river and beauty of the Vltava pearls could compete with their beauty with the sea pearls.

Dlouhá No. 94

A witch Annabella lived in this house. It is a pity that in 1947 the room with an open fire where the witch did her witchcraft was not preserved. Everything was reconstructed and the fireplace was destroyed at that time. The whole room with the open fire gave the impression of the mysterious and dreadfulness of the witch, and later even more when people found the strange pots on the fire place that were beautifully decorated. Hherbs were inside some of

them, bones in the others.

Gypsies coming from Slovakia were accommodated in this house. They came to Český Krumlov as the new settlements after an action of the then District national committee to find new manpower. The gypsy children explored the house and they came to the cellars with the casemates. These were small cells - 1 x 1 m - for prisoners and handcuffs were hanged of the walls. A prisoner could not sit there, he could only stand. One gypsy child closed himself into one of those cells and he died there. Later because of this event, access to the cells was closed so that it wouldn't be found so easily.

Mermaid, White Lady, and Old Man of the Sea, all at Rumyší díra

Dlouhá No. 97

A very rich citizen lived in this house. He did not allow his daughter to marry a boy whom she loved very much, and he chose a rich man for her. After their wedding which was celebrated in this house, the newly-married couple went to České Budějovice - the town the husband came from. But on the way near Mirkovice an accident happened. Nobody knew what happened exactly, but a postilion that carried the post to Český Krumlov found the carriage turned over and the couple and their coachman were dead. The very next night the girl´s father dreamed a horrible dream in which his daughter reproached him for her wedding.

Parkán No. 120

Legend says that a water sprite protected this mill. He was ugly but very nice to people. When the salmon migrated he helped everybody. It is really very nice fairy tale with a lot of stories about the water sprite who was loved not only by the miller but by all people living by the river.

Radniční No. 129

At the time when Josef II. dissolved their monastery, the last nuns of the St. Claire order moved into this house. The nuns did not change anything in their looks, they still wore their monastic cloth and did only good things. Many tales are about them.

Horní No. 154

Today´s hotel Růže was founded on a place of the former Jesuit college. Wilhelm von Rosenberg had to buy a few houses to the college on their places. None of the owners wanted to sell his house cheaply. Only one of the owners did not care about anything. He forbade his daughter to marry an equestrian because he had found a rich man for her. He told her that either she marries the man he found for her or she has to go to the convent. Unhappy Elsa chose death in the Vltava river. Her soul can not find peace in eternity even today, and from time to time she appears and bewails her unhappy fortune with her eyes.

Horní No. 159 - Kaplanka

Festival of the Five-petalled Rose in Český Krumlov 1998, knights' tournament on hourses

Václav z Rovného bought this house from its former owners and in 1520 he passed it over to the vicarage at the St. Vitus church. The only condition of this sale was that after the death of the former owners a office for the dead will be read every year. Everything was set and signed. But as the time went on it happened that they forgot this office for the dead and then the curate´s room and the church were haunted. As the office for the dead was read everything was quiet again.

St. Vitus Church in Český Krumlov

Many legends and true stories are connected with this church. People say that a curate fell asleep in a confession box and he was presented in the midnight service of dead men of Český Krumlov. In the morning people found the curate in the church - he had white hair and he died within a year.

The second legend is about a painting at the organ picturing the Coronation of the Virgin. At one time the painting was hung in a presbytery and the Virgin´s face resembled the face of one local citizen's dead wife so much that he could not help himself and he cut out the face. He confessed his sin before his death in a public confession.

Music school in Kostelní street (Kostelní No. 161)

People tell many legends about these houses. Formerly it was a Jesuit school. A legend says that one day a Jesuit was very angry with his student who was at his desk. He beat him with a pointer so badly that the student died later on. His parents could not cope with the death of their son and they execrated the Jesuit teacher. He died within a year. Since then the house has been haunted. As time went on many magicians came to this house and tried to evict the unhappy souls and clean the place up. But an opposite thing happened - with their magic even more ghosts came.

It happens very often that people staying in the house feel that the place is overcrowded. We can say that the ghosts are happy there - unlike in other houses.

Latrán No. 1

Formerly there were baths in this house. An unhappy girl named Markéta Pichlerová came from this house. She was brutally killed in 1608 by Don Julius de Austria, a bastard son of emperor Rudolf II. After World War II a fronton of this house was demolished to allow lorries and buses possible to go through a town. A fresco with a picture of Markéta Pichlerová was painted on the house.

According to legend, once a very bad slanderous woman was washed in the baths against her wish. She was very dirty and smelled awful, and she hurt many people with her sharp tongue. When she was finally washed, the people expelled her from the town.

A nice small house could be seen at the rocks behind the baths. It was to have been a house

Zlatá Koruna school, classroom aid from 18th century, picture of spa scenes

built by the first settler. He built his house on a place an elf showed him and where a river nymph welcomed him. When the first settler died a very bad man lived in this house. He was the man who gave information to robbers living in a rock grotto. He always told them when wagons full of goods were coming to a small village that was probably situated on a hill. Today the hotel Růže is on that place.

Latrán No. 6

Český Krumlov, Church of St. Jošt on a full moon, foto: Libor Sváček

Many legends are told about the former church of St. Jošt. But in one thing they concur: from time to time something very strange was going in the church tower. It was certain that nobody was in the loft. It was said that after the church was discontinued and was desecrated that the devil himself used to appear in the tower and he fearfully laughed. Sometimes people living in the house could hear steps coming up the stairs to the tower. Some people said that the last organ player could not reconcile with the fact that the church was closed and he died very soon after. He used to appear very often at the places were the organ used to be and cried very painfully for it.

Latrán No. 36, Nové město

Formerly this house was a dye-works. People dried the dyed cloth in the open loft. Legend says that a walkway was in a room with a big vat full of boiling water. An open fire was kept under this vat and the journeymen had to walk on the walkway with long mixing devices and mix the water. The young men wanted to make this boring task a little bit funny and so they pushed each other. But one boy slipped on water, fell into the vat and died in boiling water. When somebody slept in the house for the first night he always saw this scene. A shoemaker lived in the house and he and his guests also saw this cruel event. Only a service for the dead made everything all right again.

Latrán No. 37, Nové město

It used to be an inn in a house in corbels and a courtesan Justina worked there. She fell in unhappy love with a courier. When his service in Český Krumlov was over and he left, Justina

went mad from her unhappy love and she constantly looked for her lover. In the end she ended her life in a river. After her death all drawers and wardrobe in her room very often opened on their own, because the lonely soul of the girl was looking for some message from her lover. The girl was attracted especially by one chest-of-drawers. After the war, when all furniture left in the house after the Germans was chopped up, girl´s ghost left the house.

Large corner stones are on the corner of the inn. Once the murder of an assassin happened there. A man leaving the inn was killed by a someone who stabbed a dagger into his back. The man fell on the stones and died. Many times it happened that people walking there late at night saw the man breathing very hard and lying on the stones, and the dagger stuck out from his back. But when they reached the stones nothing was there.

During the time of the Thirty Years War, this whole street was a place of frequent fights. Many legends are told about them, as many soldiers died there. Some late night walkers said that they could hear the rattling of sabres and cries of cying people.

A street leading to a river used to be a trade route called Jantarová (amber) - when the Etrusians carried amber from the Baltic sea to their kingdom through this way. Later on it was called "Via Regia" (the path of the king) because it helped Romans to come to the barbarian people whom the Romans wanted to bring under their domination. And in the end it was called "Linecká" (Linz town). It could be that in these places wagons full of goods head south were raided many times. This legend is connected with the foundation of the castle in Český Krumlov; the robbers had their hiding place on a top of the rocks. Lord of Rosenberg found this place and he destroyed the whole band. After that he founded a castle and a town on the same place.

Latrán No. 39
A magistrate for the town of Latrán lived in this house. One evening somebody knocked on the door of his house. When magistrate´s wife opened the door there was a woman veiled in a black veil. She said her name was Lidmila and she stayed to live in the house. Especially children loved her because she was very nice to them. She never uncovered her face. Once a neighbour found Lidmila dead outside the house. Probably she had a heart attack. She died and nobody knew anything about her - even her true name or anything about her relatives. She the left magistrate´s family a lot of money. From time to time she walks around the house - even today.

Castle No. 46 - New Pharmacy
A legend says that once when a pharmacist mixed some mixture for a medicine, his helper talked to him and he accidentally reached for poison. He did not recognise it straight away and he gave the medicine to an errand boy. A patient took the medicine and died a short time after. At the same night he appeared in front the pharmacist and reproached him with his death. The pharmacist ran to his pharmacy and discovered the truth - he had really killed his patient. He went mad from his conscience and two days later died. From time to time his ghost appears at night in the pharmacy.

Latrán No. 48, Klášterní
A recent occupier of this house heard a strange noise coming from a ground floor several

Běleč u Malšína
Until nowadays people have been shown the place in a rock, where a devil used to live. He enjoyed disturbing the local mill. The miller and mill-hand laid in waiting for the Satan and then closed him into the hollowed out space in a block of wood. When the devil realised that they would like to saw him up with his wooden prison, he took all his energy to get out of the block. He set the mill's roof on fire as a revenge. Then he was gone and left the entire countryside in peace for ever.

Benešov nad Černou
Our Lady was seen at just the point, where the little river of Černá leaves the village. She stood up on a huge boulder rinsing the diapers. The traces of her feet and pleats of her cloak remained in the hard stone after her disappearance.

A stone's throw from Benešov, there is an immense treasure concealed in a cave hidden under the huge rocks. It opens on each Palm Sunday at the moment, when the songs of Easter Passions are performed in the nearest church. A poor widow with her little baby took a black hen, which was supposed to bring good luck, and went on the way to the treasury. The rock opened by itself and the woman put down her child and the hen. She left the cave with the arms full of money, jewels and precious stones. The rock closed down immediately and the unhappy mother had no other alternative than to go home. She became rich because the black hen brought her good luck. Nevertheless in the same time she was very sad by loosing her baby. The desperate woman returned to the cave in one year. Nevertheless she did not crave for wealth in that moment. When the rock opened, she took her baby and left for home very happily.

Boletice
At the time when two stubborn and cantankerous peasants of Boletice died, they were buried side by side in graves. People each night heard how both deceased persons still cursed and took each other to task with such volume that the neighbourhood's inhabitants could not sleep at all. The news about the quarrelsome dead farmers went from one place to another and the village became a laughing stock. The old priest kindly appealed to Rome for some advice. The Pope replied himself that the Crosses of both graves' heads should be turned back to each other. Silence and peace have governed at the Boletice cemetery since that time.

Černá v Pošumaví
Once in the course of a wonderful silent night, two men went through the forlorn and desolate forest from Černá to Plánička. The horse, at breakneck speed, started to run for no reason. A shrieking scream sounded close to their wagon and an enormous glare lit up the trees as if from a huge fire. A disgusting animal, similar to a lizard, soared up into the air while sending sparks out of its tail. Both people noticed the specter of the monster, which was called a cattle fright. It used to startle the livestock to such extent that some died from horror. It was also impossible to control their horse, which stopped no sooner than the inhabited village.

As with the other castles and chateaux owned by the Rosenbergs, the White Lady appears in Rožmberk castle and walks around the castle every night and announces coming events by the colour of her dress. The black clothing means something tragic, on the other hand the white colour brings good news. According to the legend she was seen last at the time of World War II when with her presence, she expressed her disagreement with the Nazi flag hanging on the tower. The inspiration for the White Lady is Perchta von Rosenberg (1429 - 1476), a daughter of Ulrich II. von Rosenberg who worried herself to death during her unhappy marriage.

Rožmitál na Šumavě
Sometime in the past, while in a meadow a miller saw a snake with the little gold crown on its head. He unfolded his scarf on the land, the snake crawled closer and put its little crown there. The miller ran fast home with his scarf. He firmly closed the door and all windows. In that moment thousands of snakes rushed against the closed door and windows of his house, against the man, who robbed their queen's crown. However it was in vain. Since that time all has been very well at the mill.

Rychnov nad Malší
The story of one merchant, who shared his piece of bread with a mouse running around, is chiselled out into a stone at the church of Holy Trinity. The mouse brought him in return small pieces of gold from her shelter. The merchant uncovered the earth with the help of a stick and found a gold treasury. He portioned out its half to poor people in Rychnov and he ordered to build a church for the other half.

At the time when Our Lady walked around the village, she went up on a giant stone to look around. The stone split in two parts and a rift was created. It has been becoming wider since that time. The end of the World will come, when the crack has such dimension that a fully loaded vehicle goes through.

Svatý Kámen Pilgrimage Church
In 1634 a bricklayer from Rychnov nad Malší called Šimon Stepinger chopped down a tree growing near the Holy stone to have some wood for fuel. But when he made a fire of that tree at home his three years old daughter came to the fire so close that her dress inflamed. Despairing father of the heavily burnt child reproached himself that he chopped the tree on the holy place and he was very sorry for that. He ardently implored Panna Maria Těšitelka (Holy Virgin the Comforter) of grieved people to save his child. His prayer was heard and the daughter got well very soon. The news about that spread very quickly and people started to visit this holy stone and they pray the Holy Virgin for help.

Velešín
The will-o'-the-wisp's lights appeared at night around Velešín. They were souls of people, who in course of their life reset the borderlines marking their field. After the death, the souls of those thieves changed into erratic lights appearing just in the places, where they stole parts of a field or meadow from their neighbours.

The other will-o'-the-wisps are souls of suicides buried outside the consacred land of the cemetery. The souls will not find piece until their bodies are properly buried.

One night a carman went up to the Netřebice hill from Velešín. He had so many erratic lights on his vehicle that he could not continue. He started to pray as he was afraid a lot. The more he prayed the more the will-o'-the-wisps came. Then the carman started to curse. The will-o'-the-wisps immediately disappeared and he could continue his journey.

The erratic lights were seen nearby Velešín for the last time in February 1882.

Little Castle "Vítkův Hrádek"
A story, telling about a family tendency to suicide and about a human anger, is from the secluded place called Pink Hill. A poor woodland worker and his many children used to live there. One day his wife died and they found him hanged in the forest. His brother thought in the morgue, what a shame on the whole family. He slapped the face of the dead person. Since that moment he had been constantly thinking about his dead brother. He was sorry about doing that and that he did not take care of brother's children. After certain time he hanged himself in his house. The youngest brother, lead probably with the family tradition, to show the curious people how much better he is than his dead family members, slapped twice the face of the dead person. The malevolent people put him down and called him names, laughed at his suffering in such extent that he hung himself on a linden behind the village. None of those dead persons was allowed to have a grave in consacred land. All of them were buried without a priest in a lonely place.

In a forest that surrounded the ruins of the little castle of Vítkův Hrádek and from the Saint Thomas church people could hear cries and lamentations. A forester who wanted find out what was going on, stayed hidden not far from the church and at midnight he saw a phantom without a head sitting on a stone, wearing priest's habits and saying the words of a mass. When the priest finished his prayer he already had his head with sad face on his shoulders. He saw the forester and he blamed him for interrupting his a hundred years lasting atonement. He atones for he desecrated his mission of a priest because of a woman and he committed suicide. Now as the punishment he has to celebrate a mass in the forest for a thousand nights. On an advice of a parish people from surrounding villages became to pray every day for this lost priest and from that time cries and call from the forest was not heard.

Vyšší Brod Monastery
The little wooden pilgrims chapel of Saint Anna, where the nobleman Wok used to come once in a while, was located on the place that would become the monastery in Vyšší Brod. The level of the river went up after much rain. The ford was high and the rider with his horse was carried away by a wild current. Wok made a promise in anxiety. If he gets save from the danger, then he will build a monastery with a church by the side of the little chapel. The other legend says that lord Wok von Rosenberg established the Monastery as thanks for his happy return from the military in Bavaria.

Strange things happened in a small wood nearby Vyšší Brod. Two women collecting wood suddenly noticed a hunter, who stood at the entrance gate of an admirable beautiful town with palaces and towers. He welcomed both women. They were scared and lost each other in

fear. Just when one of them took off her jacket and turned over the right hand sleeve, the phantom was gone and she recognised the way out of the forest. Both persons wandered around in that grove for one whole day.

A cruel and greedy farmer from one village close to Vyšší Brod was dying. When the priest, who came to give him the last confession, opened the case with the prepared Host, he found out that it was not there. He hurried back to the church for another one, but the farmer died in the meantime. The new owner of the farm in course of constructional work found a snow-white untouched consacred wafer under the threshold. He brought it to the church. One woman confessed to the priest that she suggested it to that mean farmer. She told him to insert the consecrate wafer under the threshold of his cowshed for the livestock to do well. That explained, why the unbeliever could not obtain the last rites.

A woman with a baby in her arms sat on a high stone not far from Vyšší Brod. Herdsmen disturbed her at her rest by hullabaloos and crackling of their whips. At the moment when they reached the place where the woman and her baby were seen, they were silent immediately. After the Virgin Mary, the traces of her naked feet and a stool were impressed onto the stone.

Zlatá Koruna Monastery

Přemysl Otakar II, the iron and golden king, as thanks for the triumph over the Hungarians in the battle at Kressenbrunn, fulfilled his promises to establish a famous monastery. The monastery received the name Holy Crown or Crown of Thorns, like a saintly relic, a thorn from the crown of thorns carried by Christ on his head during the crucifixion. The sovereign Přemysl gave it to the monastery as a gift. The relic was inserted into gold and that is why the original name did not catch on. People soon started to call the monastery of Zlatá Koruna (Golden Crown) and that name remains until now.

An abbot of Zlatá Koruna was told that Wilhelm von Rosenberg, for whom the monastery built on his family's estates was like a thorn in his flash, made an emperor believe that the monastery was almost abandoned and nobody used it. An imperial officer was already on his way to the monastery to work out the situation. Before he came to the place, the abbot called all monks from neighbourhood, also his serfs from the villages together and clothed all of them in the priest's habits. He sat them to read the big Latin books and told them that nobody was allowed to speak not to reveal their lack of knowledge. The imperial officer saw everywhere the groups of monks reading the Latin books but he did not have any courage to ask anybody a question to hide his own ignorance. The reports he gave to the emperor were probably positive because the monastery of Zlatá Koruna remained safe and the Rosenberg ´s struggles came to nothing.

One big lime tree at the monastery courtyard was connected to a legend explaining the teardrop-shape of some its leaves. It is in remembrance of the monks who were hanged and killed there by the Hussites in the 15th century. The teardrop-shaped leaves are often on the lime trees and the reason for this is a kind of illness of that tree - a virus, that causes the concretion of the top parts of the leaves and forms a so-called scoop. Even the age of that lime tree does not correspond with those events because it was planted about 200 years ago.

Zvonková

The Swedish troops went there on a waterlogged road during the Thirty Years' War. Their wagons sank into mud. There was no other chance than throw away part of their loot. A couple of years later, a bell was detected in the earth in the course of repair of the damaged road. The settlement was one of the possesions of Johann Christian I. von Eggenberg. One day during his visit to his property, he admired wonderful bunch of little blue bells, which he received as a present from his subjects. Then he looked around and noticed that even the forests surrounding that place have the shape of a bell. That gave him the idea to call the new settlement such a lovely name.

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Český Krumlov

Two stone statues were standing not far of Krumlov on one field cross-roads. Both figures were so similar that they used to call them stone brothers. Pilgrims from a big distance went there to see it. The city-hall had removed the statues due to the fact that too many people used to gather there. In the place of the statues' excavation, there were two deep holes but no effort could fill them up. Both figures were stocked in one shed. A peculiar light and strange voices came out of there at night. The head of the farmstead became restless. He ordered the replacement of the statues, one to the chapel in the centre of the farm and the other one into the forest of Trojice. Then it happened again that the crowd united in front of them and the pilgrims decreased in the nearby Kájov. The decision to remove the statues was taken again. Two men took them away on a covered vehicle, upon the order of the České Budějovice Consistory. Everywhere that heavy load went the bells of small chapels and churches started to ring by themselves. All traces of that unusual team then disappeared in Budějovice.

When a rich Český Krumlov middle class person Gruntherer got old, he started to have restless sleep. He almost overnight became wealthy to such extent that he nearly did not know what to do with money. He confessed to his spouse that his soul is signed to the devil for money. His worried spouse ran to the prelate of Krumlov to ask the advice. That powerful man, who knew how to effectively and terribly invoke spirits and evils, just with one word called up the Satan and started to observe the document signed long time ago by the rich man's own blood. The prelate found out that the submitted bond by the devil had the name of another citizen of Krumlov. He used a stronger magic formula and the devil had to bring the proper document. The prelate burned up both bonds and saved that way the couple of citizens from the eternal fire.

A gang of highway robbers used to have a base on the Krumlov rock a long time ago. There they ambushed and held up travellers and vehicles with their merchandise. The bandits made sure not leave any witnesses of their bad deeds. For that reason, all attacked persons were massacred without mercy. One day a messenger of lord Witigo went around, the bandits assaulted and captured him. The messenger warned them to notice that he was in service with the powerful Witigonen family. The blackguards ignored it. They hanged the messenger by his neck and cut off his arm. It was spasmodically holding a document. They threw the arm with the document into the gate of the lord Witigo's residency. Then the lord of the Rose sized the gang's den and burned it to the ground. That way it never could be a place of a band's shelter. He ordered to build up a strong castle there to guard its surrounding. A town grew around the castle. There was very soon a need to name its streets. The long street under the castle complex was called Latrán, due the tale in memory of that gang of highway robbers. The Latin word of "latro" is obvious in its name. It means a bandit or a blackguard.

A woman's figure in a white cloth used to appear at cradle the of Peter Wok von Rosenberg and all nannies were frightened to the death. She calmed down the crying baby. She silently left, just when he got to sleep. The white specter appeared as a premonition of the dynasty's extinction. One day after a long time Peter Wok came back to Krumlov. He asked the old lady, his former nanny, to describe to him the place, where the mysterious apparition of the White Lady disappeared that time. The news soon filtered out that lord Witigo uncovered an

enormous treasury at the wall of one castle room. The rector of the Jesuits College became a witness of another apparition. The Lady in a white cloth looked out of the castle window. Seven unusual lights, following the valley of the river to Rožmberk, left the mansion after a while. Those phenomena were followed by the ring of a little bell above the gate.

Čertova Stěna Rock Formation (Devil's Wall)
Satan was annoyed by the establishment of the monastery in Vyšší Brod. For that reason, he wanted to build a dam in the gorge, to capture water for the flooding of the monastery. The infernal powers threw giant stones onto the Vltava riverbed. Nevertheless the work had to be performed before three cock's crows. The prince of the Hell with his wicked powers did not succeed. A cock crowed three times and the infernal power was over. A bell sounded at the tower of the monastery and Satan had to let the stone fall. The traces of his infernal claw are obvious on it up to nowadays.

The huge stone above the Vltava river is called the Pulpit of Satan. The Čertova Stěna (Devil's Wall) is located just under, there are many stones on the sheer rock. That rock used to be called the Scary Centre long ago. Upon one tale, it used to be a sacred place, where old Slavs adored their God of Goodness, called Svatoroh. They say that the Christianity exploited the old myth for the achievement of a new legend. According to that one, the wicked force meant the Satan and the good was represented by the monastery of Vyšší Brod.

Dívčí Kámen Castle
A young Rosenberg called Jošt hounded a hind deer. Suddenly it disappeared near a high rock above the Vltava river. Instead of it a beautiful pale maiden appeared on the rock and Jošt lost his heart to her. The girl did not trust his words of love unproved by any feat. To prove his given word he built the castle on the rock and named it Dívčí Kámen. Another legend says that the poor herds-woman did not reciprocate the lord of Rosenberg but he kept on loving her for all his life and the castle was named after her stony heart. The legend also says that Jošt built the castle for one of his five daughters to hide there before the secular demoralisation. The backbiters said that Jošt who was a passionate fellow took his lovers to the rock and pushed them down into the Vltava river when he got tired of them. The bones of many of them are still on the bottom of the river. But nobody was so courageous to call powerful Rosenberg before the court.

An elf watches over the huge treasure hidden in the ruins. Whoever will see the elf, will greet him politely and will not laugh at him they will find the treasure. A poor farmer wanted to take some stones from the ruins to build a new house. Somebody sneezed behind him. The farmer said "God bless you!" but he did not see anybody so he thought somebody from the village made fun of him. When he heard the sneezing for the third time he did not answered politely. At the same time it got dark and from the cracks of the stones around strange pejors with pipes and tambours jumped out and started to dance around the poor farmer. Then the whole procession changed into skunks, foxes, wild pigs and bears. The scared farmer fainted. So the treasure is still waiting for a polite man.

Dolní Vltavice
Once in course of the daily pasture of a parish priest's flock, an old woman, bent with old age, appeared in front of a heardswoman. Her snow white hair was dishevelled and sloppily falling down the old lady's face. Her hands, feet, neck and shoulders were covered by moss. The unusual old woman asked the heardswoman to comb her hair. The girl did not like the idea, however she started with her shaking hands to unravel and comb tangled up hair. At the moment when she touched the old woman's head, she noticed the entire body was cold as ice. The girl suddenly could not lift up her numbed hands. The old person poured small amount of dead leaves into the heardswoman's apron and was gone. At home the amazed young woman found a wonderful gold coin hiding inside her apron. After that, many people were looking for that strange woman covered by moss to get such a generous gift from her as well.

Frýdava u Frymburka
On the fields by a little stream, there is a small rock, called the Stone of Satan. It almost disappeared thanks to people taking out the stones for their building. At one time, a poor stripling signed his soul to a devil there to have a good luck in hazardous roles. The young man was doing very well, in comparison to previous times. However his time was soon counted. He was supposed to report at the Stone of Satan and to be taken away by the devil. On the way to that place, he confessed about his fishy connection to his God-fearing neighbour. The neighbour along with the priest of Frýdava tore the stripling with a big effort out off Satan's claws. The redeemed young man turned over a new lief.

Once two forestry boys rested until the morning at a hayloft in a forest thanks to the foul weather. They heard the racket of some hunt at night. One of them, who did not want to show his fear in front of the ghostly night hunter, shouted out to the hunt's noise. He wanted the wild hunters to hunt something for him as well. A great thump resonated in the air and there were decomposed remains of a roebuck laying at the doorway of their hayloft. However the youths tried to bury the remains, they did not succeed. Death-like pungent odour, for which everyone kept away from him, remained on a forester who tried to call out with recklessness the night hunter. Later on, upon an advice of an experienced old man from Frymburk, the young man got an altar veil. He wrapped the dead roebuck into it and bit the dead meat with the biggest stifle. Then he threw off the consequences of his thoughtlessness.

Frymburk
At the time when a farmer, working on the meadow close to Frymburk, did not return home for a long time, they went to look for him. His wooden shoes were only left. The mystery was, what could have happened to him. Thirty years later he suddenly appeared in the village. He came all the way in socks, because that day they took his clogs from the meadow. He told them that he had ended up in the other world. That there was a lot of huge candles and each of them represented one human life. He could explain to everyone how long they would be living since that moment and who was about to go to the eternal peace. People curious about their afterlife paid him for his stories until the local parish priest put him into a prison to avoid divulgence of the secrets about the afterlife to people.

Hodňov

Long time ago, a huge fir tree, the great-grandfather of the Šumava veterans, used to grow in the forest by the Upper-Austrian border. A similar giant grew up in the Bavarian forest that time. It was the great-grandmother. In a moment when the great-grandfather of trees fell down by the hatchets of lumberjacks, the robust trunk of the great-grandmother shacked and its top fell down as well.

The devils took care of turning the gamblers and blasphemers over for the better in the Hodňov area. At the time when one passionate gambler wanted to pick up a fallen card from the floor, he noticed that his unknown team-mate had a hoof. He went away with panic. In his pockets, there were found just horse-droppings instead of the money he won. The horrible blasphemer was taken by the devil's claws and thrown into mud. The devil, glowing by sparks, was nightmarishly grinning from a linden above a spring at the boy, who cursed. There is no doubt that all those sinners turned over a new leaf.

From the Hodňov pond, all fish disappeared in one moment and each new fry died. The unhappy pond-keeper was advised by a wandering pond-digger that a bad magic of dead water had to be broken by the sacrifice of an innocent baby. The pond-keeper set forth on a journey. He caught a little gypsy. He closed him into a cask and threw him to the pond, which came back to alive. There was such amount of fish as never before. The conscience of the pond's owner was just a bit oppressive, because he discontinued the devil curse by a bad turn and he abused a human life. He got old and ill thanks to his anguish. Once purely by chance he heard a story of one roaming gypsy. One foolish farmer caught him as a baby and closed into a barrel. Nevertheless its lid was purely hammered and that was why the little gypsy managed to escape. Since that time the old pond-keeper could peacefully sleep again.

Horní Planá

Höpfler, an owner of the Hamerský mill, was afraid neither of death, nor of the devil. One of the mill boys wanted to try the miller's courage. At night he dressed as a devil and with infernal mumbling entered the room. The miller approached peacefully the table and took a knife. He asked with threatening if the infernal visitor had his blood red or black. At the moment when he came near with his knife, the malicious striplings took their heels.

In one village nearby Horní Planá, there used to live two neighbours. One ran his farm poorly and used to sit in pubs. The other was industrious, diligent and moderate. His farm went from strength to strength. The good-for-nothing farmer ate the other's heart out over envy. He attributed the neighbour's success to sleight of hand and magic. In a huge malice, he set the prosperous farm alight. He asked his singed neighbour to forgive him, when he saw the outcome of his acting. He promised to give the wood from his forest for free to the construction of a new farmstead of his neighbour. At the time when the burned down neighbour with witnesses went to see the arsonist to get the confirmation upon their agreement, they found him lying down on his stomach with his face pushed into a vent in the ice of a shallow little brook. The Satan himself forced him to suicide. That way the devil did not lose the soul, which could be redeemed thanks to the neighbour's pardon.

There were two boys of the same age in service at the farm. One was skinny and crawly. He was disappearing day by day. The other just flourished with health and energy. The ill one

confided the following to his strong friend. Each Saturday at midnight, the farmer's spouse changes him into a horse and rides him to the top of the Třístoličník hill to join the Sabbath of witches. The strong farm boy wanted to help him. One Saturday they exchanged their places in bed. The farmer's wife really changed the strong boy into a horse at midnight. They reached Třístoličník and she tight him up to a tree. The farm boy watched the odiousness performed in course of the witches' meeting. He succeeded to throw down the bridle. He switched to his human form, put the horses tackle over the neck of farmer's spouse and in that moment changed her into a horse. By beating and kicking, he rushed her in the air to Horní Planá. He woke up a smith and asked him to shoe the defending horse. Next day the farmer went to wake up his wife and he found her with nailed horse-shoes on her hands and feet. The farmer's spouse was, as a witch serving Satan, condemned and burned to death in the public.

The pious parish priest from Horní Planá made a firm resolution to crush witches, who spread that time and harmed people. Those, bringing the storm clouds and bludgeoned the harvest with a hailstorm, were the most feared. Those kinds of storms never came to Horní Planá. The priest consacred the church's bells with a special blessing and their resonation had a power to chase away any storm with the witches as well. One day the foul weather came suddenly and the sacristan running from the field did not reach the bellringer in time. The parish priest shot a consacred glass bowl into the clouds. The wind stopped and one extremely hideous old woman floated down in front of the church. People collected a huge heap of wood due to the fact that she was recognised as a witch and they wanted to burn her up to death. Her last wish to get a ball of wool, was fulfilled. She threw it to the sky and went up to the clouds. Although the infernal powers saved her servant but the harvest remained untouched.

Hořice na Šumavě

The Hořice inhabitants were afraid of one burgher, who knew how to use his unusual collected knowledge to his profit. Thanks to the consecrated chalk and magic, he froze a thief, who wanted to take away a pig from the pigpen, for the whole night. In the morning he let him go by a formula. Nevertheless that citizen accidentally killed a poor old lady stealing his clovers. He overslept and the transfixed thief was burned up to ash by the morning sun. Since that time the unhappy human being had done the atonement, i.e. twenty-five pilgrimages to Mariazell. An enormous fatigue fell on him during his last journey. Worn out with the feeling of despair he hanged himself on one tree nearby the road in the forest.

Fortified Settlement of Chlum

There is a legend about an underground passage connected the fortified settlement of Chlum. The passage was supposed to begin there and go an hour's journey away from the village.

Kájov

A monk, who believed that only Saint Holy Virgin of Kájov could grant mercy and dispensation for him, was killed on his pilgrimage and his killers cut his head off. The monk's

head rolled away, sighed and screamed that it wanted the priest and confess its sins. The poor head, covered with blood and mud did not stop screaming and crying before it came to the pilgrimage church and the priest heard its wish and gave it an absolution. Then the blooded shouting mouth silenced and eyes closed. The monk's head and body that the pilgrims brought, were buried on the cemetery in Kájov.

A miserly farmer was dying in an outlying village not far from Kájov. His heirs promised to put a pillow, on which he was lying, under his head in the coffin. When they began to look for their inheritance and could not find it they thought the dead man took it with him. They dug up the coffin and opened it. The dead man laid on his tummy in it hugging the pillow full of money so tightly that the relatives had to close the coffin and bury the miserly man with his money again.

A coach used to be seen pulled by horses bellowing fire at nights by the ruins of Kájov. A lady dressed in black with a gold key in her hand was sitting in the coach. From time to time a vine cellar full of barrels of vine was opened under the ruins. But the entrance was watched by a mad black dog. Once a poor woman happily took a full apron of ducats from that place, but she noticed a grey little man shouting after her that she carried only chicken's droppings. Indeed! She did not have anything else in her apron. She threw everything away but at home she found one gold ducat hidden behind the ribbon. Another day a little boy brought four yellow rings that he found under the ruins and when he showed them at home they were gold ducats. A very unpleasant thing happened to a young farm servant who sang a song on that place - an invisible hand smacked him heavily and he had to run away from a dog with blazing eyes.

The church was heavily damaged during the fire of the Kájov vicarage and school. The new church began to be built on the same place where the Corpus Christi chapel is until today. The work went on quickly but at night a strange noise could be heard. In the morning they found the construction in ruins. The stones were moved to another place. It happened for three nights so at the end they decided to build the church on the same place where the stones were moved. Other legend says about a roofer who fell down from the roof before the church was finished. People around were horrified with what happened but the workman got up unharmed, took his tools and went on in his work again.

Miraculous water was in the stone well near the church. Many people came to the well to drink that water. One of them was the mayor from near-by village Záhorkov. He was paralysed in both legs and suffered very much as he had to stay in bed all day. One night he had a life-like dream - he saw a sculpture of the merciful Holy Virgin of Kájov who talked to him and called him to wash himself in the miraculous water from the Kájov well. The man did as she said because he admired her very much. She was said to shine with the light of heaven surrounded by singing angels. A farm servant brought water from the well and the mayor washed himself. He fell asleep and when he woke up he found out that he was healthy and could walk again.

Fortified Settlement of Kladenské Rovné

Once upon a time an old maid fell into a pond that was later dried out and changed into

meadows. Because she did not want to get drowned she asked the local green-coated manikin for help. The water sprite took her to his house, sat her to a spinning-wheel and told her to spin flax for his new suit. The poor woman spun for three years but there was still too much flax left. Once she had a dream to turn the skein about. She did so and suddenly she was finished with her work. At that moment she appeared at home again and had a bag full of ducats with her.

Once the Holy Virgin saved a young woman from the village from an evil spirit. The woman was cutting grass and suddenly the earth under her started to shake and a young strangely laughing devil of a fellow appeared in front of her. Half-dead she unwittingly clasped a nearby stone. When she got over the shock, the devil disappeared inside the stone, she was leaning against and she saw bare foot prints on the ground. In a distance she saw a woman dressed in a long coat and carrying a baby.

Kleť

On the highest mountain of the Blanský les (forest), there was a strong castle, where the ruler Hrozen governed. He had an only daughter, a kind-hearted and lovely one. They used to call her Krasava. There was a lot of suitors courting her favour, particularly a well-built young man with sun-tanned cheeks and a sparkling look. There was a rumour going about that he was the Beelzebub himself. At the moment when the infernal ruler noticed that his transformation was given away, he swore to retaliate for getting the cold shoulder from Krasava. One day, when everybody went away to hunt, the Beelzebub raised hell storm above Kleť. He was breaking the strong castle walls and throwing stones to all cardinal points. A wandering monk going around by coincidence lifted up the Cross and chased the Beelzebub to Hell. The boulders, lying down until nowadays on the top of Kleť, are the fragments of the powerful seat scattered by Satan.

Castle and Monastery of Kuklov

When the Swedish soldiers came to the Kuklov castle they killed a number of monks and the rest of friars who did not have enough time to escape using an underground passage were captured and hanged up on a big lime tree in front of the monastery. One of the rescued monks, a devoted monk Erazim, settled in the deep forest called Blanský les (Blanský forest) after this tragedy. He built himself a hermitage on a glade and lived there only with the company of a domesticated hind deer. Very soon he became in demand as a spiritual adviser for many people from surrounding villages. But in winter he was killed by wild animals. People buried the pieces of his body beside his hermitage. Since then this place has been called The Black Man's to remember the devoted hermit who was called black because of the colour of his order's habits.

Little Castle of Louzek

On a sheer rock above the Malše river are the ruins of the little castle of Louzek the owner of which was a cruel and bad knight. Once a pilgrim from Jerusalem came to the castle and warned the cruel castle Master of rightful punishment. But the knight did not care and put the poor pilgrim into the castle cellar where he suffered from snakes, scorpions, bats, salamanders, toads and rats. When the prisoner died all of those horrible animals spread all over the castle. Scared inhabitants escaped and the repulsive varmint ate the cruel Master

alive. Since then the castle has not been settled and nobody can help the last owner who walks at night in the ruins crying and screaming.

Once on Christmas Eve the pigs ran from a farm yard under the castle, ran away and a young herdsman ran after them to catch them. He could not find the lost herd it was only at the next Christmas Eve that the pigs and the herdsman appeared again in the yard. The boy told that he ran after the pigs in the underground cellars of the little castle of Louzek but he did not know that it took all year.

Fearsome robbers settled down in the ruins of the castle. There was a passage underground leading to an old lime tree. Every night the robbers stretched out a wire with a bell on the end. When the bell began to ring they ran out of their hidden places and robbed the poor traveller, killed him and buried him under the roots of the lime tree. When the robber band broke up the treasure was left in the underground passages. Whoever would find the remains of that lime tree and also the underground passages could take this treasure with them but they have to give a half of it for the benefit of the church.

Pernek

Peculiar, however effective fire prevention precautions were taken by one chimney sweep. After a bolt of lightening, a wooden house in the middle of the village started to go on fire. The chimney sweep shortly said a prayer and started to run, as fast as he could, around the already burning buildings. He made sure that the part of a house, which was still untouched by fire, had to be always on his one side. The blaze seemed to bar him from finishing the cycle around the village. Nevertheless the entire fire, when the chimney sweep passed by, commenced to go out and diminish. It happened that only four buildings were burned down and the rest were saved.

Little Castle of Pořešín

A huge stone above the Malše river has on its top a pit where the robbers living in the Pořešín castle washed away the blood to enter the castle with clean hands. The stone was called the bloody bowl. A master of Pořešín together with his robber band attacked merchant couches on the trading path to Austria. The legend says that when the Pořešín castle was captured by force the robbing knight was hanged up on a wild pear tree, but it also was said that his head was cut off beside that bloody stone and it was thrown away to feed crows. The knight of Pořešín has to walk around the ruins of the castle every night because of what he did. Once a young herdsman came to the castle ruins to find a treasure. A frightful monster of a woman appeared in front of him and she advised how to free the spellbound knight and get the treasure. When the herdsman did nearly everything that he was told to do he suddenly heard a voice behind him telling him that his cattle is in a wheat field. Because the young boy cared about his work, he forgot his mission and turned back. It was all up at the same time and the knight was not freed and the treasure remained in the same place as before. The curse could be cancelled only by children who were dandled in a cradle made of a wood of three lime trees growing in the village. Some farmer planted three lime trees but he made wash-tubs of them so the knight of Pořešín still waits for his freedom.

Rožmberk nad Vltavou Castle

Perchta von Rosenberg, portrait

Perchta von Rosenberg, a beautiful daughter of Ulrich II. von Rosenberg, had a happy childhood at her father\'s castle in Český Krumlov. When she grew up she had many suitors as the daughter of a powerful nobleman. Her father married her off against her will to Jan von Lichtenstein - on one hand a powerful lord of noble rank, and on the other a violent and boorish man who had been a widower for only a short time.

A life full of slights and suffering began for distinguished, noble-hearted Perchta. In the Lichtenstein castle lived the mother and sister of his deceased wife, who harassed Perchta and took every chance to make her life miserable. They teased her and assigned her to unpleasant jobs without a friendly word. Her marriage was a hell on earth from which there was no way out. Her prayers to soften her husband\'s heart were in vain, as were her desperate letters she wrote to her brother: "Take me away from these evil people and you will merit praise as if you released a soul from Purgatory."

No one could help her, as the morals of the time wouldn\'t let a wife leave her husband even though he treated her in the worst way.

It was not until her husband\'s death that she was released from this prison. She happily returned to parental castle and became the good soul of the castle and kind-hearted patron of those who suffered. Her face indelibly mirrored the pain and suffering she had experienced, and no one ever saw her smile again. Sad, slender, prematurely faded, with curly golden hair covered by a white veil, she walked through the chambers and courtyards of the castle and watched over her brother\'s estates.

She was only 49 when she died in 1476. Her death was a terrible blow not only for the Rosenberg lords but also for the poor throughout the region. They never stopped mourning for her and soon began meeting her in their dreams.

The White Lady, as they called her, used to appear at the castles in Český Krumlov, Rožmberk or other castles in the Rosenberg property, wearing a simple white dress with keys around her waist and sauntering through the corridors and chambers, prepared to face the future events. A smile on her face was a sign of good tidings whereas black gloves in her hands and a solemn countenance foreshadowed impending disaster or death.

The White Lady took care of the children of her family and protected them from harm. When nurses fell asleep from tiredness she cradled and soothed the babies. The nurses who had known her let her do so. The White Lady took special care of the last child of her family, Peter Wok.

Once, when the nurses fell asleep again, she walked up to the cradle and caressed and

Peter Wok von Rosenberg, life-size portrait, Charles Louis Philippot, 19th century

comforted the little Peter. There was a nurse who had recently come in service at the castle and didn\'t know the White Lady. As she woke up and saw the baby Peter in arms of a strange, unknown lady she snapped at the White Lady, "How dare you hold the little Peter? You have nothing to do with that child!"

The nurse wanted to take the baby away from her but she clasped him to her heart, replying angrily, "It\'s my right to look after this child as he belongs to my family. How dare you blame me for anything?" The she turned to the nurses woken up by the noise and rebuked them, "Why don\'t you do your duty as is right and proper? From now on take care of the child yourselves!"

Portrait of Perchta von Rosenberg - White Lady

She stepped to the wet nurse and said, "Look after the baby. When he grows up tell him how much I have loved him and show him the place from which I used to come to his cradle and then leave it again."

Saying those words she bent towards the child, gave him a smile and kiss and then disappeared in the wall, turning into a light white cloudlet.

Since that time no one saw her at the castle again.

When Petr Wok grew to manhood and heard the White Lady\'s message he had the wall where she had vanished demolished. It is believed that he found a treasure in that place.

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Taxi firm Russifies drivers' names

8 December 2014 bbc.com

Last updated at 11:21 ET

A taxi at night

A Russian taxi company has been changing the names of its drivers, because it says those with non-Slav names are being discriminated against.

Get Taxi says drivers with names originating in Asia or the Caucasus had been receiving lower ratings on its booking app, which allows passengers to review their experiences. As an "experiment", the company decided to Russify the drivers' identities, apparently with their permission, to see if it made a difference to people's reviews, the RB.ru business news website reports. "We don't want one driver to get a lower rating than another, just because of his name," says Get Taxi's owner Shahar Waiser, adding that all drivers have the same training and knowledge. He says the aim was to "reduce nationalism", but acknowledges it may have backfired. Mr Waiser says the company will now review its policy.

Social media users are broadly unimpressed with the move. "This is precisely a case when the customer is not right," says Moscow State University ethnologist Dmitry Oparin on his Facebook page. "If the customer refuses a driver with an 'exotic' name, he should proceed on foot." But the company may not be alone in its controversial practices. According to prominent Russian blogger Rustem Adagamov, the smartphone app for a rival taxi firm offers a "Slav driver" option at no extra charge.

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Matt Soniak
filed under: birdsHistoryvomit

March 3, 1876, was a beautiful day in Bath County, Kentucky, and a local farmer's wife, Mrs. Crouch, was outside making soap.

"Between 11 and 12 o'clock I was in my yard, not more than forty steps from the house," she told reporters. "There was a light wind coming from the west, but the sky was clear and the sun was shining brightly. Without any prelude or warning of any kind, and exactly under these circumstances, the shower commenced."

Suddenly, meat came raining down all around her.

"When the flesh began to fall I saw a large piece strike the ground close by me, with a snapping-like noise when it struck," Crouch said. "The largest piece that I saw was as long as my hand and about half an inch wide. It looked gristly, as if it had been torn from the throat of some animal. Another piece that I saw was half round in shape and about the size of a half dollar."

For several minutes, Crouch and her husband Allen watched as pieces of fresh, raw meat, some "delicate shreds as light as a snowflake" and others "a solid lump three inches square" fell from the sky.

Mrs. Crouch said she was "impressed with the conviction that it was either a miracle or a warning." The Crouchs' cat, less concerned about meaning of the meat than his masters, "immediately gorged himself with the public breakfast so unexpectedly tendered to him."

When it was over, the "Kentucky meat shower," as it came to be known, left an area of the farmyard 100 yards long and 50 wide strewn with flesh. "Particles of meat" were found "sticking to the fences and scattered over the ground."

The shower drew plenty of attention, and curious neighbors and newspaper reporters flocked to the Crouchs' farm to see the mystery meat and offer their opinions on it. Many locals said it looked like beef, but one neighbor who was a hunter, "on being shown a piece of the flesh, declared it to be bear meat, and stated that it had 'that uncommonly greasy feel' peculiar to the flesh of that animal."

Tastes Like Mutton

Others took it upon themselves to taste it, and two men said it was "either mutton or venison." A local butcher who tried a piece "declared that it tasted neither like flesh, fish or fowl. It looked to him like mutton, but the smell was a new one."

With no one able to identify the meat by sight or taste, the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* reported, "a great deal of the flesh was sent to chemists and others in various parts of the

country, and analyses were made by several well-known scientists."

A Professor J.L. Smith initially thought that the "meat" was actually dried frog spawn that had been picked up from a pond by the wind, but later abandoned the idea.

Leopold Brandies, writing in a journal called *The Sanitarian*, claimed that "the 'Kentucky Wonder' is nothing more or less than the 'Nostoc' of the old alchemist," a "strange-looking vegetable mass" [now recognized as cyanobacteria] consisting of "translucent, gelatinous bodies joined together by thread-like tubes or seedbearers."

A few other scientists concluded that their samples "possess undoubted characteristics peculiar to the flesh of animals"—it was indeed meat, but which kind was unclear.

Dr. L.D. Kastenbine, a chemist at Louisville College, heated one sample over a Bunsen burner and noted that it had an odor "distinctly like rancid mutton-suet on warming, and after ignition had the characteristic smell of burned animal tissue." He also treated some pieces in chemical solutions, which helped expose muscle fibers and connective and fatty tissues. "As the specimen was not placed in alcohol the odor was retained, which a number of meat experts pronounced without hesitation mutton," he wrote. "Since my examination I have learned that others have arrived at the same conclusion as myself, some even asserting that the wool of the animal was distinctly seen."

Doctors Allan McLane Hamilton and J.W.S. Arnold agreed that the flesh had come from an animal, but it wasn't mutton. After examining a piece under a microscope, they identified it instead as lung tissue either from a horse or a human infant, "the structure of the organ in these two cases being very similar."

Dr. Mead Edwards, meanwhile, examined three different samples, "two in the natural state as they fell and one prepared and mounted for the microscope." The mounted specimen and one of the others, he determined, were bits of cartilage, while the last piece was composed of "striated muscular fibers along with what appears to be dense connective tissue." While the condition of the samples prevented him from identifying source of the flesh, Edwards concluded that all of the specimens "proved to be of animal origin, showing that the Kentucky shower was a veritable 'meat' shower."

But if it was meat, where did it come from? William Livingston Alden, writing in the *New York Times,* offered two different tongue-in-cheek explanations. The first was the "obvious conclusion" that the deluge of meat was a bizarre form of meteor shower. "According to the present theory of astronomers, an enormous belt of meteoric stones constantly revolves around the sun, and when the earth comes in contact with this belt she is soundly pelted," he wrote. "Similarly, we may suppose that there revolves about the sun a belt of venison, mutton, and other meats, divided into small fragments, which are precipitated upon the earth whenever the latter crosses their path."

Alternately, he offered that "a terrible suspicion has since grown up that the shower actually consisted of finely-hashed citizens of Kentucky, who had been caught in a whirlwind while engaged in a little 'difficulty' with Bowie knives and strewn over their astonished State."

A more probable explanation, suggested by the Crouchs and chemist Robert Peter and supported by Kastenbine, Edwards and Smith, was that meat shower was simply vomit produced by a passing flock of vultures “who had been feasting themselves more abundantly than wisely” on a carcass.

“I am informed that it is not uncommon for buzzards thus to disgorge their overcharged stomachs,” Smith wrote. “And that when in a flock one commences the relief operation, the others are excited to nausea, and a general shower of half-digested meat takes place.”

That would explain the melange of muscle, connective tissue and fat that was recovered, Kastenbine wrote. It would also, unfortunately, mean that a cat and a bunch of people were eating bits of half-digested meat off the ground.

Whatever the meat was and wherever it came from, you can see a bit of it for yourself. The Monroe Moosnick Medical and Science Museum at Transylvania University in Lexington has a preserved piece of meat from the shower in its collection.

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THATCHER: DOLPHINS COULD HUNT LOCH NESS MONSTER

mirror.co.uk

A NESSIE hunt using a team of dolphins was planned by the Tory government, according to declassified secret documents.

Within days of the 1979 election, officials in Margaret Thatcher's regime proposed importing the mammals from America and fitting them with hi-tech equipment to scour Loch Ness.

Despite opposition from animal rights groups, it was argued that finding the monster would benefit local tourism.

A letter from Environment Department civil servant David Waymouth to Stewart Walker at the Scottish Home and Health Department, showed the Government wanted a licence to initiate the plan.

It stated: "This department is presently considering the issue of a licence to import two bottle-nosed dolphins from America for the purpose of exploring Loch Ness.

"Inquiries have been made with the mammal experts on the Scientific Authority for Animals and their advice is that there are no conservation or welfare reasons for refusing a licence.

"Clearly, however, there are other factors, mainly political, that you might wish to consider before the licence is issued."

The National Archive of Scotland contains no record of a response to the letter, which was released under the Freedom of Information Act.

However, Adrian Shine, a naturalist who has been investigating the Loch Ness mystery for several decades, said he believed the dolphin plan was the brainchild of veteran monster hunter Dr Robert Rines.

Dr Rines was the founder of the American-based Academy of Applied Science who took a now-famous underwater photograph in 1972, which appeared to show a large flipper in the loch.

The Academy of Applied Science in New Hampshire confirmed that dolphins were being trained with mini cameras and strobe lights that would have been activated if they encountered any large objects.

Last week, it was revealed that civil servants made plans to give Nessie legal protection from poachers and bounty hunters in the early 80s.

The plan was instigated when the Swedish government asked for help to preserve their equivalent, the Storsjo monster.

UK officials then realised there was nothing to stop a trophy hunter from tracking down the beast and killing her.

It was eventually decided that Nessie should be protected as part of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, rather than specific legislation.

Under the provisions of the Act it is illegal to snare, shoot or blow up the monster.

mirrornews@mgn.co.uk

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The 6 Most Badass Weapons Ever Improvised in Battle

CRACKED Readers

War is a terrible thing: Sometimes you have to take the life of your fellow man in the most brutal and extravagant ways...and you just don't have a good enough weapon to do it as hard as you want. That's when you start strapping every weapon you have to every other weapon you have, and hope that physics is in a good enough mood today to let you fire knives out of your machine gun. Like these guys:

#6. Anti-Tank Sniper Rifle

When the Nazi war machine rolled into Stalingrad, they had no idea what was in store for them: Crazy ass Russians. We know better now. We know that Russia is mad in the weirdest ways - like an ultra-violent Japan - and you shouldn't even look them in the eye, much less try to invade the bastards. But it took 5 months of brutal, unrelenting warfare in a bombed out frozen Hell to teach the Nazis that lesson. Nonchalantly strolling around this bombed out wasteland was legendary sniper Vasily Zaitsev.

Via Wikimedia Commons
No jokes here. He may have died 20 years ago, but we're pretty sure he can still tag us from the afterlife.

The Red Army's elite sniper teams, when not busy killing Nazis, used their spare time to think up new and interesting methods of killing Nazis. In one of these epic brainstorming sessions, Zaitsev, probably after frantically sketching something in his notebook while making explosion noises with his mouth, came up with the idea to take a scope from a Sniper Rifle and attach it to a giant 14.5 mm PTRS-41 Anti-Tank Rifle. He wanted to use it to kill bunkers.

Entire bunkers.

Just straight up murder a fortified concrete fortress.

Here's a PTRS in action:

The idea was to fire the huge explosive shells through the viewing slits on Nazi bunkers, exploding them from the inside out, which was roughly the equivalent of successfully performing eye surgery with a chainsaw. It's probably also worth mentioning that the PTRS-41 had a nasty habit of breaking the user's shoulder when they pulled the trigger, so we guess it's more like performing eye surgery with a *double-sided* chainsaw. Madly, awesomely, terrifyingly - it worked. In the laconic words of the 284th division's combat journal:

"Sniper Morozov managed to send an enemy bunker up in flames using an Anti-Tank Rifle"

Via kitsune.addr.com
"But it wasn't a thing; he does that shit all the time."

#5. Flamethrower Fougasse

In the dark days of WWII (the part before America moseyed on in and just totally saved everybody, all by themselves, no foolin',) the British were anticipating a full-on Nazi Blitzkrieg to come rolling right over the White Cliffs of Dover. Short on weapons, but well-stocked with fuel and moxie, the British decided to kill two birds with one inferno. Yep, they jury-rigged themselves some giant, tank killing, flamethrowing landmines ("Fougasses" was their technical name, but all the other weapons would make fun of them on the playground if they knew.)

Via Wikimedia Commons
FIRE. SOLVES. EVERYTHING.

Luckily, for all fans of activities like 'having skin' and 'not roasting like a chicken,' they were never actually used...

In Britain.

Not the case in Russia: According to this order signed by Field Marshal Georgi Zhukov, a Soviet "FOG Static Flamethrower" destroyed 4 tanks and an entire company (around 150 men) of submachine-gunners, causing the survivors

to understandably flee in panic, seeing as how the mouth of hell opened up and melted their god damn tank and all. The Germans, possibly inspired by the effectiveness of the device (or just to silence the screaming in their heads) designed their own Flamethower Landmines later in the war.

Via Wikimedia Commons

Finally, in the Korean War, America took what was already a spectacular weapon and Michael Bayed the shit out of it. The Russian and German Flamethrowers had an 8 Gallon canister full of oil, and they melted tanks. The American version had a 55 Gallon barrel full of napalm, and they melted Gods.

"The fire you kindle for your enemy only burns yourself, unless it's with this thing."

#4. The Drip Rifle

WWI was when the planet lost its World War Virginity. As with all such experiences, it soon became clear that nobody knew exactly what they were doing, and a bad time was going to be had by all. A prime example of this confusion can be seen in the Gallipoli Campaign, which amounted to thousands of Allied troops sitting on the side of a rock for a year, not really achieving much. After months of stalemate, the Allies decided that sustaining 60 percent casualties to hold a pile of stones in the middle of nowhere wasn't really worthwhile, and decided to pull out.

Via Lifeasahuman.com
"Guys! We didn't bring any protection. We're going to have to just pull out." - The Allies

As a general rule, when an army tries to leave the battlefield, the enemy is obliged to inflict as

much damage as possible, to make sure they don't come back. This is called the Where The Good Lord Split Ya maneuver, and the Allies knew full well that it was about to be used against them. So ANZAC Troopers William Scurry and Buntie Lawrence took a break from performing the juggling Vaudeville routine their names suggest they toured with, and instead built what they called 'Ottoman Bafflers.' Using bits of string and old ration tins, Scurry and Lawrence MacGyvered up a gun that fired all by itself, using drips of water falling between two cans, or taut strings being burnt through by candles.

Via Thefirearmblog.com
They later designed a way of getting a beer from the fridge using only a spoon, two rubber bands and some hockey tickets.

Everyone had expected appalling casualties in the withdrawal from the aforementioned kick in the ass on the way out, but due to the Drip Rifle, the whole army managed to escape with only a dozen or so killed or wounded. For context, you couldn't make a sandwich in World War I without a dozen or so killed or wounded.

Ha ha...ha...ahhh...a lot of people died in that war.

Photos.com
And it was probably because of something you did.

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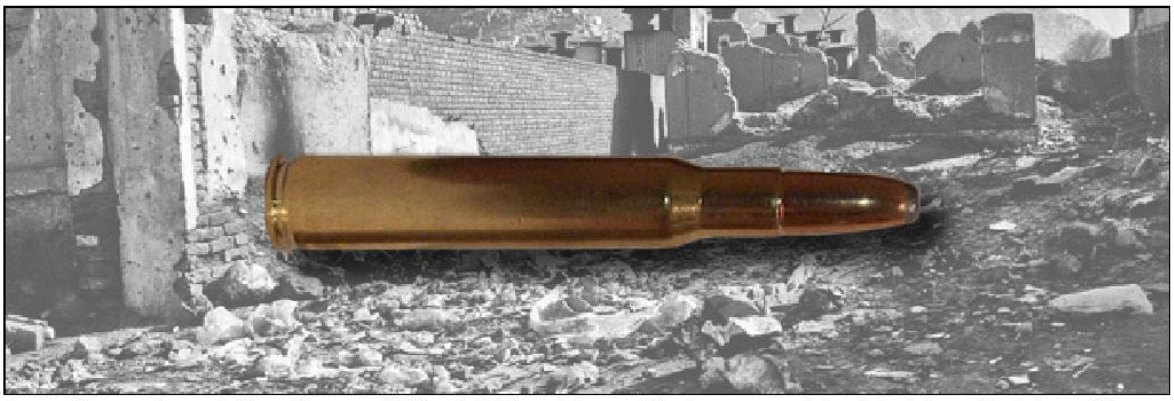
The 6 Most Badass Weapons Ever Improvised in Battle

CRACKED Readers



Before America entered the Second World War, Tony Stein was a Machinist, a Golden Gloves Boxer and a Navy Reservist. So he was kind of hardcore to begin with, and then a good ol' man-makin' war came around, and it was like tempering steel in Grizzly blood. At some point during Stein's conquest of half a dozen Pacific islands, he came upon a downed Douglas Dauntless Dive-Bomber (alliteration is always fun, even in the face of genocide!) with its tail gun still intact. Stein took the gun, added the stock (the back side) from an M1 Garand, the bi pod and sights from a standard machine gun, and a box to hold the chains of .30 caliber bullets.

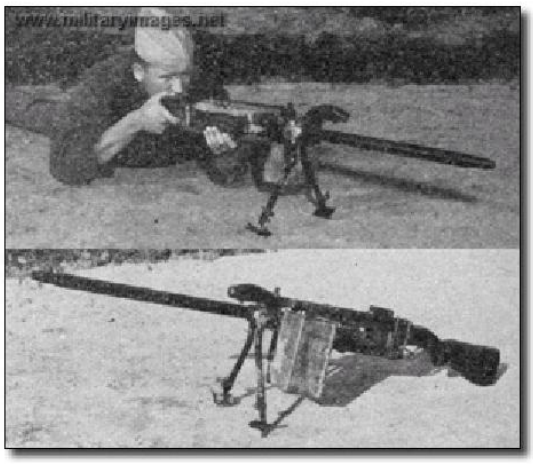
Via Securityarms.com
There's just so... much... gun.

Jesus! Look at that thing: It's like every gun in the world had sex with every other gun in the world, and then neglected the resulting love-child until it became psychotic and vowed revenge on everything.

Remember: This was a gun designed to be mounted on a plane in order to kill other planes. And Stein figured that was as good a thing as any to heave up on his shoulder and go Nazi destroying. The Stinger had a Rate of Fire in the region of 1,500 rounds a minute, which is well within Mini-Gun territory. To put that into perspective, here's a video clip of a gun with a rate of fire of 1,200/minute.

Photos.com
Which is enough to easily saw off the top of a building.

When the US launched its assault on Iwo Jima in February 1945, Stein was there with his ad-hoc bastardized God-worrier. The power of the bullets would tear fortified emplacements apart and suppress the occupants enough to allow demolition charges to be hurled in to finish the job. The Axis was probably grateful to see that charge, actually, after a few minutes of having all the air around them replaced by bullets.



Via Militaryphotos.net
It might as well have shot other guns instead of bullets.

#2. SAS Battle Jeeps

In 1940, a man named David Stirling came up with a plan to fight the Nazis in North Africa: Drive American Willys Jeeps hundreds of miles across

uncharted desert while evading Axis patrols, sneak up on a Luftwaffe Airfield in the middle of the night, and wreck the place on foot.

Via blindkat.hegewisch.net
And then melt them with our *minds*.

Nobody said it was a good plan. It's like somebody went through an actual strategy and replaced every instance of the word "tactical" with "balls out."

But astoundingly, it worked fine, for a bit. Eventually, though, the Germans upped the security on their airfields. So the SAS took a cue from Compton, and incorporated the mother of all drive-bys. They'd take up to half a dozen heavy machineguns pilfered from Allied aircraft, and strap them to their jeeps, resulting in these wildly over-powered, cartoonish gun platforms:

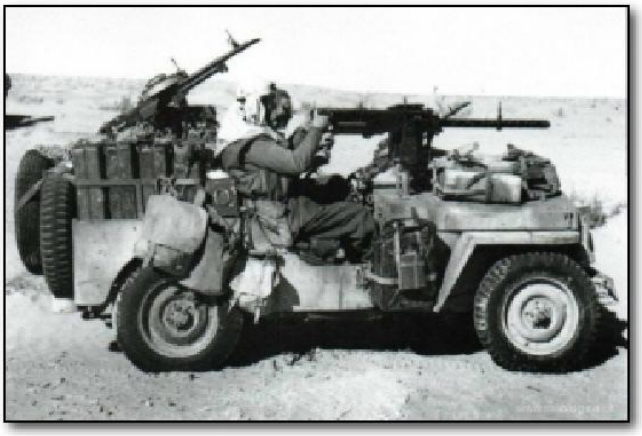
Via HD2
"Ehh... Needs more guns" - David "More Guns" Stirling.

That is a vehicle comprised entirely of guns, ammo, gas, water and poor impulse control. Not even radiator grills survived the strip down. Using these old-timey Twisted Metal characters, Stirling and company would tear ass past an Axis airbase in the dead of night, all guns blazing with tracer rounds, and presumably high-five as the world exploded around them.

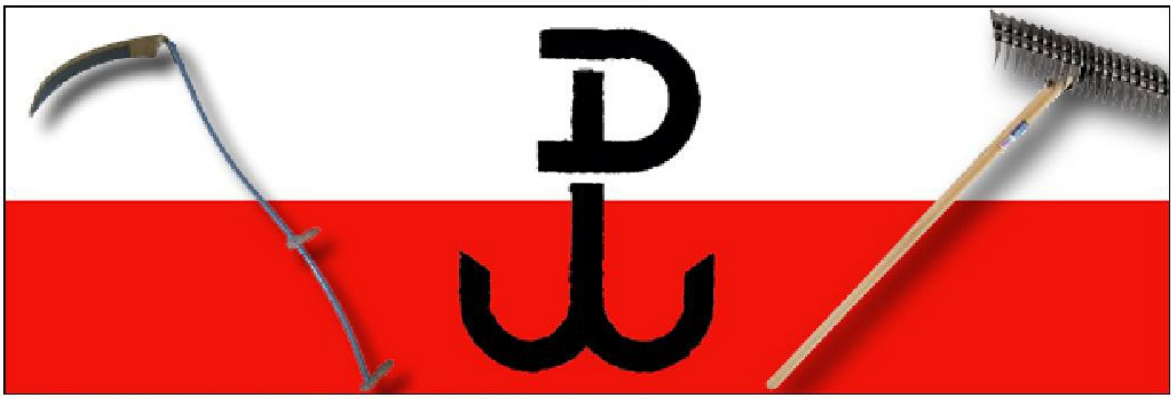
After that it was just a matter of getting as far away as possible before the remaining ground attack aircraft could get airborne. Hopefully they saved their turbo power-ups, instead of making the rookie mistake and just grabbing all the fireballs.

Via miliblog.co.uk

#1. The Polish Home Army's Everything



Poland is Europe's Afghanistan. Every superpower that tried to swallow it up has been subjected to unrelenting and extremely violent resistance. The Poles rose up against the Russians in the 1870s with giant medieval scythes, and they defeated an army wielding modern muskets and cannons. As to be expected, they didn't exactly welcome the Nazi war machine with open arms (nobody really did; the Nazis were notoriously discourteous house-guests.)



Photos.com
And they all wore stupid looking socks.

Britain was too far away to supply arms effectively, and the Soviet Union mostly didn't give a damn, so the Poles were very much on their own. What else was left to do but surreptitiously build all the weapons they needed themselves and fight the bastards anyway. Factories were set up in basements, auto repair shops and strongholds hidden deep in forests and swamps. From there, they supplied arms of astonishingly high quality to the resistance.

The Poles in their underground, impromptu factories managed to design, test and produce Filipinka and Sidolowka grenades, the Blyskawica, Bechowiec and KIS submachineguns, and satchel charges made from stolen munitions and dud German artillery shells. While these things are very impressive (or at least really good at puttin' holes in dudes,) that wasn't the end of the Pole's murderous ingenuity. Take, for example, the K-Pattern Flamethrower:

Via Wikimedia Commons

It consisted of one tank of compressed air, one larger tank full of a gas-diesel mixture, a rubber hose, a valve, a pipe and a short length of rope on the end of the barrel that would be kept constantly alight.

They used them to destroy Tiger Tanks.

Or how about the steampunk catapults they made from the leaf-springs of a truck, which they used to fling Molotov Cocktails over fortified walls?

Via Halibutt

But the biggest, craziest Polish MacGyverism of Death was the Kubus armored car:

Via Halibutt
People who were alive during the 80s should have the horn section from the A-Team theme blaring in their head right about now.

The whole thing was based on a Chevy truck platform, and was churned out in only 13 days in the back of an auto-repair shop in Warsaw. For reference, modern mechanics take 13 days to replace a headlight, and that's not counting the week spent waiting for the spring-clips to arrive from Korea.

There was no design or testing stage here, no written plan or blueprint: The manufacturer, Cyprian Odorkiewicz (O'Dorkowitz? Really?) just threw it all together and then drove it out the front door, straight into the Warsaw Uprising. It was armed with a Russian machinegun up top, and armored slots all around, from which the dozen Poles inside could fire their guns,

tank-killing flame-throwers, or just swing their crazy-ass scythes around, depending on their ingenuity, resources, and how little of a fuck they wanted to give that day.

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Bardstown lies in Nelson County, southeast of Louisville, and it's host to a large, beautiful cemetery on the northern edge of town. The earth was first broken in the cemetery in 1852, and it's grown to occupy 15 acres with more than 3,000 people at rest within its grounds.

The cemetery's life took it through the height of monument craftsmanship in America. A great craze for mourning, funerals, and monuments for the dead spread across America and the British Isles in the late Victorian era. Combined with the ornate architectural and sculptural styles of the period, this movement filled cemeteries across the English-speaking world with some truly beautiful sculptures. Cemeteries from the period were designed to be a combination of garden and art gallery, intending to provide a tranquil place for permanent residents and visitors alike. The Bardstown Cemetery is home to some exceptional monuments, and it's well worth a visit just to take a tour of the monuments.

But one of the cemetery's most famous residents was in no way in favor of these elaborate memorials. John Rowan was a prominent politician in the first half of the 19th Century. He served as Kentucky's secretary of state, chief justice of the court of appeals, as well as representing the commonwealth in the U.S. Senate. His estate is now a Kentucky State Park, fondly called My Old Kentucky Home because of its association with his cousin, the great American songwriter Stephen Foster.

Rowan's achievements were many, but at the end of his life he insisted that he wanted no memorial placed above his grave. His parents had been buried in graves without markers, and Rowan was firm in his belief that he should not be honored above his parents. When he died in 1843, his wishes were initially respected, but his family soon formed the opinion that his legacy and importance to the history of Kentucky overrode his wishes. A few short years after his death, and a large obelisk was placed over his grave.

Then the troubles began. One morning, a few months after the marker was raised, a groundskeeper on his morning rounds found that obelisk had tumbled from its base, and was lying in the grass some distance from the grave. There was no immediately obvious reason why the gravestone should have fallen. There had been no wind the night before, in fact the weather had been calm and clear for some time. The puzzled groundskeeper called in the local stonemasons to return the obelisk to its base. A few weeks later, the monument was once more lying on the ground. Once more it was restored, and once more it came tumbling down.

People soon began o think that John Rowan's ghost was upset at having his wishes ignored, and the angry spirit was knocking over the grave marker. At one point, the stonemasons became so frightened of the idea of a ghost knocking over the gravestone that they refused to return to the graveyard to replace the obelisk.

For over a century, without apparent cause, the grave marker has occasionally tumble to the ground. While he seems to have become reconciled to the marker over the years, John

Rowan's ghost will still occasionally knock over the obelisk. It's a game of tug of war that the ghost and the groundskeepers may well be playing forever.

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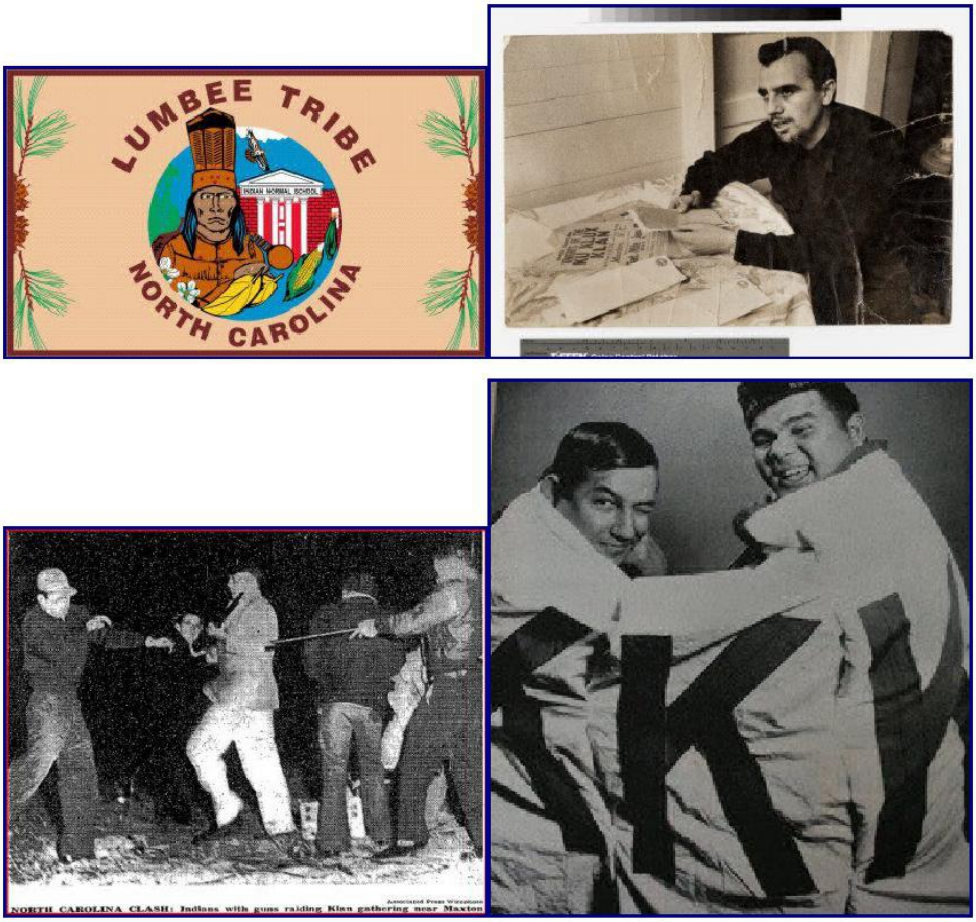

peashooter85:

The Lumbee vs. The Klan —- The Battle of Hayes Pond

The Lumbee, descendants of the Cheraw tribe, are a tribe of Native Americans who have been living in Robeson County, North Carolina for generations. They are known perhaps as one of the most prosperous of all Native American tribes in the United States. But in the 50's the Ku Klux Klan were very aggravated with their existence.

Klan leader and radio evangelist James "Catfish" Cole decided it was his holy mission to put the Lumbee in their place. He called them mongrels and demonized them for intermarrying with whites in the area. Within the next couple of weeks several cross burnings and acts of vandalism were conducted against Lumbee families. Soon after fliers were distributed advertising a large klan rally to further drive fear into the Lumbee tribe. Police warned Cole not to enter Robeson County. They knew the Lumbee were not so easily intimidated.

Cole and his Klansmen met at Hayes Pond on the night of January 18, 1958. The rally began with a sermon and the singing of hymns. Little did they notice 500 armed and angry Lumbee hiding in the surrounding forest. When Cole stood on the podium to speak, shots rang out disabling the lights and sound system. Then when all was dark and quiet the

Lumbee burst forth from their hiding places, shouting traditional war whoops and firing their guns into the air. The Klansmen were so stunned by the surprise attack that they immediately scattered. Catfish Cole himself abandoned his wife and hid in a swamp full of reeds. Cole's wife tried to escape in an automobile but crashed into a ditch. Many other Klansmen were found by police hiding in the swamps or lost in the woods.

After their triumphant victory the Lumbee gathered the abandoned Klan talismen. Among the spoils of war were an unburned cross, a large KKK banner, robes, flags, and other miscellaneous regalia. They paraded their loot in triumph through the local town of Pembroke. Then they piled all their Klan regelia in an open pit and burned it. For the rest of the night the victors of Hayes Pond danced and partied. Fun was had by all.

Except Catfish Cole and his men, he served a two year sentence for inciting a riot. Klan activites would cease in Robeson County.

The Boyfriend's Death

An Urban Legend

A rusting old car in the woods - Owen Franken/Photographer's Choice RF/Getty Images

Also known as "The Mad Axeman"

Example #1:
As told by Shirley Pugh:

A girl and her boyfriend are making out in his car. They had parked in the woods so no one would see them. When they were done, the boy got out to pee and the girl waited for him in the safety of the car.

After waiting five minutes, the girl got out of the car to look for her boyfriend. Suddenly, she sees a man in the shadows. Scared, she gets back in the car to drive away, when she hears a very faint *squeak... squeak... squeak...*

This continued a few seconds until the girl decided she had no choice but to drive off. She hit the gas as hard as possible but couldn't go anywhere, because someone had tied a rope from the bumper of the car to a nearby tree.

Well, the girl slams on the gas again and then hears a loud scream. She gets out of the car and realizes that her boyfriend is hanging from the tree. The squeaky noises were his shoes slightly scraping across the top of the car!!!

Example #2:
As told by Isabel Espaldon:

Here's a story my mom told to me and my friends when I was about seven years old. You can imagine I was scared to death...

A woman and her boyfriend were on their way home from somewhere (not important) one night, and suddenly his car ran out of gas. It was about one in the morning and they were completely alone in the middle of the nowhere.

The guy stepped out of the car, saying comfortingly to his girlfriend, "Don't worry, I'll be right back. I'm just going to go out for some help. Lock the doors, though."

She locked the doors and sat restlessly, waiting for her boyfriend to come back.

Suddenly, she sees a shadow fall across her lap. She looks up to see... not her boyfriend, but a strange, crazed looking man. He is swinging something in his right hand.

He sticks his face close to the window and slowly pulls up his right hand. In it is her boyfriend's decapitated head, twisted horribly in pain and shock. She shuts her eyes in horror and tries to make the image go away. When she opens her eyes, the man is still there, grinning psychotically. He slowly lifts his left hand, and he is holding her boyfriend's keys... to the car.

Analysis: "The Boyfriend's Death" is reminiscent of the hook-man urban legend, in which a pair of teenagers necking on Lovers' Lane race off in a fright after hearing a radio alert about a murderer on the loose with a hook for a hand. On returning home they discover, to their horror, a bloody hook dangling from one of the car door handles.

Whereas the protagonists of "The Hook" escape with their lives, the present tale concludes with the boyfriend murdered and the girlfriend in fatal jeopardy (though in some variants she is ultimately rescued by passersby). Folklorists regard both narratives as examples of cautionary tales but tend to interpret their meanings differently. "The Hook" is usually read as a warning against adolescent sexual activity; "The Boyfriend's Death" has been interpreted as a more generalized warning not to stray too far from the safety of home. "On a literal level a story like 'The Boyfriend's Death' simply warns young people to avoid situations in which they may be endangered," writes folklorist Jan Harold Brunvand, "but at a more symbolic level the story reveals society's broader fears of people, especially women and the young, being alone and among strangers in the darkened world outside the security of their own home or car." (*The Vanishing Hitchhiker*, W.W. Norton, 1981.)

Thematically, "campfire stories" such as these have much in common with the plot lines of modern horror movies, but there is an important difference. Typically, the villains in slasher films exhibit supernatural traits such as inhuman strength and "unkillability" (e.g., Michael Myers in *Halloween* and Freddie in *Nightmare on Elm Street*), while the hook-handed madmen and crazed axe murderers of urban legendry are only slightly exaggerated versions of the real-life serial killers we read about in newspaper headlines.

Read more about this urban legend:

The Boyfriend's Death
Variants of the legend with commentary by Barbara Mikkelson

Legend and Life: "The Boyfriend's Death" and "The Mad Axeman"
By Michael Wilson, *Folklore* magazine, 1998

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As told by Lisa Foley...

My cousin and his wife lived in Sydney with this huge doberman in a little apartment off Maroubra Road. One night they went out for dinner and a spot of clubbing. By the time they got home it was late and my cousin was more than a little drunk. They got in the door and were greeted by the dog choking to death in the loungeroom.

My cousin just fainted, but his wife rang the veterinarian, who was an old family friend of hers, and got her to agree to meet her at the surgery. The wife drives over and drops off the dog, but decides that she'd better go home and get her hubby into bed.

She gets home and finally slaps my cousin into consciousness, but he's still drunk. It takes her almost half an hour to get him up the stairs, and then the phone rings. She's tempted to just leave it, but she decides that it must be important or they wouldn't be ringing that late at night. As soon as she picks up the phone, she hears the vet's voice screaming out:

"Thank God I got you in time! Leave the house! Now! No time to explain!" Then the vet hangs up.

Because she's such an old family friend, the wife trusts her, and so she starts getting the hubby down the stairs and out of the house. By the time they've made it all the way out, the police are outside. They rush up the front stairs past the couple and into the house, but my cousin's wife still doesn't have a clue what's going on.

The vet shows up and says, "Have they got him? Have they got him?"

"Have they got who?" says the wife, starting to get really pissed off.

"Well, I found out what the dog was choking on – it was a human finger."

Just then the police drag out a dirty, stubbly man who is bleeding profusely from one hand. "Hey Sarge," one of them yells. "We found him in the bedroom."

Analysis: "The Choking Doberman" has circulated in more or less this form for at least three decades, on as many continents. In his book of the same title, folklorist Jan Harold Brunvand cites a plethora of known variants, including a British version dating back to 1973. The legend became hugely popular in the United States during the early 1980s. It was published as an allegedly firsthand account in an American tabloid called *The Globe* in 1981, though subsequent research revealed that the pseudonymous author ("Gayla Crabtree") had actually heard the story secondhand in a beauty parlor.

Folklorists believe "The Choking Doberman" is a descendant of a much older (perhaps as old

as the Renaissance) European folktale about a clumsy thief whose hand is either injured or amputated while committing a crime, marking him as the perpetrator. Among other interpretations it can be read as a "just deserts" tale in which the criminal, as a result of his own actions, undergoes a punishment appropriate to the crime.

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Almost two centuries before the shadow of the Mothman reared its head in Point Pleasant, West Virginia, the land around the Ohio River ran red with blood. As the inhabitants of the American colonies began to push their way to the west, and later fought for their independence from Britain, they entered into deadly combat with the Native American inhabitants of the land. Perhaps their greatest foe in these early Indian wars was Chief Cornstalk, who later became a friend to the Americans. But treachery, deception and murder would bring an end to the chief's life and a curse that he placed on Point Pleasant would linger for 200 years, bringing tragedy, death and disaster....

There is no denying that the southeastern corner of Ohio, and the surrounding area of West Virginia, is considered by many to be one of the most haunted areas of the country. West Virginia has long been thought of as one of the strangest parts of the country in regards to ghosts, legends and strange happenings. This part of the country, which was originally a part of Virginia, was regarded by the Native Americans as a "haunted" spot, plagued with ghost lights, phantoms and strange creatures. The town of Parkersburg, just north on the river from Point Pleasant, has more than its share of ghosts and nearby is Athens County, Ohio, home to the most haunted city in the entire state.

But how did this region gain such a reputation? Why are many people not surprised to find stories of the Mothman, phantom inhabitants and mysterious creatures roaming this part of the country? There have been a number of theories to explain the large number of haunted happenings here, including that this area may be some sort of "window" between dimensions. This would, according to the theories, allow paranormal phenomenon to come and go and vanish at will, just as the Mothman did after 13 months of appearing around Point Pleasant.

Those researchers with a historical bent have offered their own solutions though. They have traced the supernatural roots of the region back to a bloody event from the days of the American Revolution.. and a great curse.

As the American frontiersmen began to move west in the 1770's, seven nations of Indians (the Shawnee, Delaware, Wyandot, Mingo, Miami, Ottawa and Illinois) formed a powerful confederacy to keep the white men from infringing on their territory. The Shawnee were the most powerful of the tribes and were led by a feared and respected chieftain called "Keigh-tugh-gua", which translates to mean "Cornstalk". In 1774, when the white settlers were moving down into the Kanawha and Ohio River valleys, the Indian Confederacy prepared to protect their lands by any means necessary. The nations began to mass in a rough line across the point from the Ohio River to the Kanawha River, numbering about 1200 warriors. They began to make preparations to attack the white settlers near an area called Point Pleasant on the Virginia side of the Ohio River. As word reached the colonial

military leaders of the impending attack, troops were sent in and faced off against the Indians. While the numbers of fighters were fairly even on both sides, the Native Americans were no match for the muskets of the white soldiers. The battle ended with about 140 colonials killed and more than twice that number of Indians. The tribes retreated westward into the wilds of what is now Ohio and in order to keep them from returning, a fort was constructed at the junction of the Kanawha and Ohio Rivers.

As time passed, the Shawnee leader, Cornstalk, made peace with the white men. He would carry word to his new friends in 1777 when the British began coaxing the Indians into attacking the rebellious colonies. Soon, the tribes again began massing along the Ohio River, intent on attacking the fort. Cornstalk and Red Hawk, a Delaware chief, had no taste for war with the Americans and they went to the fort on November 7 to try and negotiate a peace before fighting began. Cornstalk told Captain Arbuckle, who commanded the garrison, that he was opposed to war with the colonists but that only he and his tribe were holding back from joining on the side of the British. He was afraid that he would be forced to go along by the rest of the Confederacy.

When he admitted to Arbuckle that he would allow his men to fight if the other tribes did, Cornstalk, Red Hawk and another Indian were taken as hostages. The Americans believed that they could use him to keep the other tribes from attacking. They forced the Native Americans into a standoff for none of them wanted to risk the life of their leader. Cornstalk's name not only stuck fear into hearts of the white settlers up and down the frontier, but it also garnered respect from the other Indian tribes. He was gifted with great oratory skills, fighting ability and military genius. In fact, it was said that when his fighting tactics were adopted by the Americans, they were able to defeat the British in a number of battles where they had been both outnumbered and outgunned.

Although taken as hostage, Cornstalk and the other Indians were treated well and were given comfortable quarters, leading many to wonder if the chief's hostage status may have been voluntary in the beginning. Cornstalk even assisted his captors in plotting maps of the Ohio River Valley during his imprisonment. On November 9, Cornstalk's son, Ellinipisco, came to the fort to see his father and he was also detained.

The following day, gunfire was heard from outside the walls of the fort, coming from the direction of the Kanawha River. When men went out to investigate, they discovered that two soldiers who had left the stockade to hunt deer had been ambushed by Indians. One of them had escaped but the other man had been killed.

When his bloody corpse was returned to the fort, the soldiers in the garrison were enraged. Acting against orders, they broke into the quarters were Cornstalk and the other Indians were being held. Even though the men had nothing to do with

the crime, they decided to execute the prisoners as revenge. As the soldiers burst through the doorway, Cornstalk rose to meet them. It was said that he stood facing the soldiers with such bravery that they paused momentarily in their attack. It wasn't enough though and the soldiers opened fire with their muskets. Red Hawk tried to escape up through the chimney but was pulled back down and slaughtered. Ellinipisico was shot where he had been sitting on a stool and the other unknown Indian was strangled to death. As for Cornstalk, he was shot eight times before he fell to the floor.

And as he lay their dying in the smoke-filled room, he was said to have pronounced his now legendary curse. The stories say that he looked upon his assassins and spoke to them: "I was the border man's friend. Many times I have saved him and his people from harm. I never warred with you, but only to protect our wigwams and lands. I refused to join your paleface enemies with the red coats. I came to the fort as your friend and you murdered me. You have murdered by my side, my young son.... For this, may the curse of the Great Spirit rest upon this land. May it be blighted by nature. May it even be blighted in its hopes. May the strength of its peoples be paralyzed by the stain of our blood."

He spoke these words, so says the legend, and then he died. The bodies of the other Indians were then taken and dumped into the Kanawha River but Cornstalk's corpse was buried near the fort on Point Pleasant, overlooking the junction of the Kanawha and Ohio Rivers. Here he remained in many years, but he would not rest in peace.

In 1794, the town of Point Pleasant was established near the site of the old fort. For many years after, the Indian's grave lay undisturbed but in 1840 his bones were removed to the grounds of the Mason County Court House where, in 1899, a monument was erected in Cornstalk's memory. In the late 1950's, a new court house was built in Point Pleasant and the chief's remains (which now consisted of three teeth and about 15 pieces of bone) were placed in an aluminum box and reinterred in a corner of the town's Tu-Endie-Wei Park, next to the grave of a Virginia frontiersman that Cornstalk once fought and later befriended. A twelve foot monument was then erected in his honor.

And this is not the only monument dedicated to the period in Point Pleasant. Another stands 86-feet tall and was dedicated in August 1909, one month behind schedule. Originally, the dedication ceremony had been set for July 22 but on the night before the event, the clear overhead sky erupted with lightning and struck the upper part of a crane that was supposed to put the monument into place. The machine was badly damaged and it took nearly a month to repair it. The monument was finally dedicated and stood for years, until July 4, 1921. On that day, another bolt of lightning struck the monument, damaging the capstone and some granite blocks. They were replaced and the monument still stands today. But what is this bedeviled obelisk that seems to attract inexplicable lightning on otherwise clear evenings? It is a monument to the men who died in the 1774

Battle of Point Pleasant, when Cornstalk and his allies were defeated.

Could the freak lightning strikes have been acts of vengeance tied to Cornstalk's fabled curse? Many believed so and for years, residents of the triangular area made up of western West Virginia, southwest Pennsylvania and southeastern Ohio spoke of strange happenings, river tragedies and fires as part of the curse. Of course, many laughed and said that the curse was nothing more than overactive imaginations, ignoring the death toll and eerie coincidences that seemed to plague the region for 200 years after the death of Chief Cornstalk.

Many tragedies and disasters were blamed on the curse:

1907: The worst coal mine disaster in American history took place in Monongah, West Virginia on December 6, when 310 miners were killed.

1944: In June of this year, 150 people were killed when a tornado ripped through the tri-state triangular area.

1967: The devastating Silver Bridge disaster (detailed in our section about the Mothman) sent 46 people hurtling to their death in the Ohio River on December 15. Many have also connected this tragedy to the eerie sightings of the Mothman, strange lights in the sky and odd paranormal happenings.

1968: A Piedmont Airlines plane crashed in August near the Kanawha Airport, killing 35 people on board.

1970: On November 14, a Southern Airways DC-10 crashed into a mountain near Huntington, West Virginia, killing 75 people on board.

1976: In March of that year, the town of Point Pleasant was rocked in the middle of the night be an explosion at the Mason County Jail. Housed in the jail was a woman named Harriet Sisk, who had been arrested for the murder of her infant daughter. On March 2, her husband came to the jail with a suitcase full of explosives to kill himself and his wife and to destroy the building. Both of the Sisk's were killed, along with three law enforcement officers.

1978: In January, a freight train derailed at Point Pleasant and dumped thousands of gallons of toxic chemicals. The chemicals contaminated the town's water supply and the wells had to be abandoned.

1978: In April of that same year, the town of St. Mary's (north of Point Pleasant) was struck with tragedy when 51 men who were working on the Willow Island power plant were killed when their construction scaffolding collapsed.

And there have been many other strange occurrences, fires and floods. Most would say however that floods are a natural part of living on the river, although Point Pleasant was almost obliterated in 1913 and 1937. It might be hard to tie such natural occurrences into a curse, but what about the barge explosion that

killed six men from town just before Christmas 1953? Or the fire that destroyed an entire downtown city block in the late 1880's? Some have even gone as far as to blame the curse for the death of Point Pleasant's local economy, an event linked to the passing of river travel and commerce.

So how real is the "curse"? Is it simply a string of bloody and tragic coincidences, culled from two centuries of sadness in the region? Can it be used to explain why the area seems to attract strange happenings and eerie tales? Or is the area somehow "blighted", separate from any curse, and attractive to the strangeness that seems to lurk in the shadowy corners of America?

The reader is asked to judge the validity of such curses for himself. For the most part, the deaths and tragedies seem to have waned over the years, perhaps dying out at the bicentennial of Chief Cornstalk's death. Largely, the curse has been forgotten over time and today, Point Pleasant is better known for its connection to otherworldly visitors like Mothman than for Indian curses and bloody frontier battles.

Fact or coincidence? Who can say... but I know that I hope, for the sake of the people of the Ohio River valley, that Chief Cornstalk will finally rest in peace!

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The curse that lead to the Mothman

New americans were eger to gain land from the Native Americans any way they could

In the Ohio River area , their biggest enemy was Chief Cornstalk , whom later became their alley

In the 1770's the seven nations of indians , the Shawnee, Delaware, Wyandot, Mingo, Miami, Ottawa and Illinois , joined together to stop the white men from taking their land.

The Shawnee whom were the strongest tribe of that time were lead by Chief Keigh-tugh-gua wich transalted to "Cornstalk" , He was Feared and respected.

In 1774 when the new Americans were moving into the Ohio river valley area the Indian confederacy lined up 1200 warriors in a place called Point Pleasent , west virginia.

though they outnumbered the Colonists they were no match to their muskets , the colonist lost about 140 the tribes lost about double that number.

as time passed Cornstalk made peace with the Colonist , he even warned them when the British were trying to convince the Tribes to attack them.

all but one tribe joined the british , but they ended up in fear of being killed.

so the new americans took , Cornstalk , and Red Hawk , in attempt to stop the indians from attacking , they were so feared of Cornstalk they didnt attack and the new americans won the battle.

Cornstalk although a hostage , was treated well , and even helped out the americans in making maps of the land , some say he may have gone in voluntarily.

but on November 9th , Cornstalks son , Ellinipisco , came to see his father and was also taken hostage

on the tenth , gunfire was heard outside the fort , the two man hunting team was attacked killing one of them.

The indians dropped of the bloody corpse of the man killed.

the americans were so outragged they stormed into their prison to kill them .

Cornstalk stood up too his exectutioners and it is said they were so fearful they paused before shooting him , it took 8 bullets before he fell .

Red Hawk attempted to climb out of the chiminey but he was taking down and slaughterd

along with Ellinipisco and one other unknown indian who was strangled to death.

he was not burried in peace . in 1794 Point Pleasent was established near the fort . the grave lay undisturbed intil 1840 when his bones where moved from the court house area and moved to a monument. though in 1950 another court house was built and he was moved again , all that was left at this point where 3 teeth and 115 pieces of bone.

a 12 foot statue was made for him.

another 86 foot tall statue was made for the troops lost at the battle in wich Cornstalks troops were defeated . though it was behind scheduel , the crane set to put it in place was struck by lightning.

then on july 4th 1921 , another bolt of lighting struck the statue , it was fixed. but was was attracted this lightning on clear nights to this statue?

Curse history

1907: the worst coal mine disaster in american history , in this year on december 6th , 310 miners were killed in west virginia
1944: 150 people when a tornado came through the area in june
1967: The silver bridge disaster , wich ended up killing 46 people and was also related to the mothman of Point Pleasent , west virginia
1968: A piedmont Airlines plane crashed in august near the Kanawha airport , 35 people died
1976: Point pleasent , the Mason County jail wich housed Harriet sisk , for the murder of her infant daughter who was being visited by her husbend was attacked by an explosive brought by the husband to kill them both , they also took out 3 law enforcement agents
1978: In january , a train was derailed in point pleasent , this caused thousands of chemicals to be spilled . it contaminated the water.
1978: that april , just north of Point Pleasent , 51 men who were working on a scaffold when it collapsed were killed.

more events such as flooding between 1913 and 1937 wich almost destroyed all of point pleasent and a barge explosion in 1953 wich killed six men from the town just before christmas . also a fire wich took down an entire city block in 1880's . people even blame it for the fall of its economy and the loss for the need of river commerce.

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The Crying Ghost at the University of the Cumberlands

The University of the Cumberlands, known as Cumberland College until 2005, is a small school in the quiet town of Williamsburg, nestled between the Cumberland River and the Daniel Boone National Forest. Gillespie Hall is the second-oldest building on campus and houses many of the University's freshman woman population. It also holds the spirit of another woman who lived in the hall many, many years ago.

The University of the Cumberlands is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention and has a reputation as a very strict school, with teachers and administration taking an active interest in the moral lives of the students. This background might explain the story of the Crying Ghost. It's said that she was student who lived in room 316 of Gillespie Hall many years ago. She was a freshman girl, a cheerleader, and someone who was looking forward to her future. This all changed she she was seduced and abandoned by a player on the school's football team. Finding herself pregnant and unable to face the shame and condemnation of her friends, her family, and her school, the girl hung herself in the attic of Gillespie Hall. Since that day, her ghost has been seen many times.

The Crying Ghost has been seen for years by residents of Gillespie Hall. On the third floor of this dorm, students will walk down the hallway at night only to encounter a young girl whom they don't recognize as a resident of the dorm. Often age is crying, sometimes she is just staring, but she always appears to be deeply sad. The figure will be wearing clothes that are out of date. She never says anything, and when approached will simply dissolve into nothingness.

Other strange occurrences seem to happen on the third floor of Gillespie. Doors will open and close, lock and unlock, seemingly by themselves. Light are seen to go on and off under the doors of empty rooms.

At one point, the ghost also seemed to hold something of a grudge, or at least be trying to send a warning about broken promises. A freshman girl who was engaged happened to be the resident of room 316. Every night, she would take off her engagement ring and set it beside her bed. Every morning, she would awake to find the ring sitting in the trash can.

This lonely spirit seems to be a permanent part of life in Gillespie Hall. Her sad story will live on as part of student life at the University of the Cumberlands.

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The Curious Case Of Sidd Finch

by George Plimpton Posted: Tue Oct. 21, 2014

Photo: Lane Stewart/SI

He's a pitcher, part yogi and part recluse. Impressively liberated from our opulent life-style, Sidd's deciding about yoga —and his future in baseball.

In honor of Sports Illustrated's 60th anniversary, SI.com is republishing, in full, 60 of the best stories ever to appear in the magazine. Today's selection is "The Curious Case Of Sidd Finch," by George Plimpton. It originally ran in the April 1, 1985 issue.

The secret cannot be kept much longer. Questions are being asked, and sooner rather than later the New York Mets management will have to produce a statement. It may have started unraveling in St. Petersburg, Fla. two weeks ago, on March 14, to be exact, when Mel Stottlemyre, the Met pitching coach, walked over to the 40-odd Met players doing their morning calisthenics at the Payson Field Complex not far from the Gulf of Mexico, a solitary figure among the pulsation of jumping jacks, and motioned three Mets to step out of the exercise. The three, all good prospects, were John Christensen, a 24-year-old outfielder; Dave Cochrane, a spare but muscular switch-hitting third baseman; and Lenny Dykstra, a swift centerfielder who may be the Mets' lead-off man of the future.

Ordering the three to collect their bats and batting helmets, Stottlemyre led the players to the north end of the complex where a large canvas enclosure had been constructed two weeks before. The rumor was that some irrigation machinery was being installed in an underground pit.

Standing outside the enclosure, Stottlemyre explained what he wanted. "First of all," the coach said, "the club's got kind of a delicate situation here, and it would help if you kept reasonably quiet about it. O.K.?" The three nodded. Stottlemyre said, "We've got a young pitcher we're looking at. We want to see what he'll do with a batter standing in the box. We'll do this alphabetically. John, go on in there, stand at the plate and give the pitcher a target. That's all you have to do."

"Do you want me to take a cut?" Christensen asked.

Stottlemyre produced a dry chuckle. "You can do anything you want."

Photo: Lane Stewart/SI

Ching, suggests that all acts (even throwing a baseball) are connected with the highest spiritual yearnings. Utilizing the Tantric principle of body and mind, Finch has decided to pitch baseballs—at least for a while.

The Mets pressed Burns. Was there any chance that Finch would come to his senses and *commit* himself to baseball?

"There's a chance," Burns told them. "You will remember that the Buddha himself, after what is called the Great Renunciation, finally realized that even in the most severe austerities—though he conquered lust and fear and acquired a great deal of self-knowledge—truth itself could not necessarily be found. So after fasting for six years he decided to eat again."

Reached by SI at the University of Maryland, where he was lecturing last week, Burns was less sanguine. "The biggest problem Finch has with baseball," he said over the phone, "is that *nir*vana, which is the state all Buddhists wish to reach, means literally 'the blowing out'—specifically the purifying of oneself of greed, hatred and delusion. Baseball," Burns went on, "is symbolized to a remarkable degree by those very three aspects: *greed* (huge money contracts, stealing second base, robbing a guy of a base hit, charging for a seat behind an iron pillar, etc.), *hatred* (players despising management, pitchers hating hitters, the Cubs detesting the Mets, etc.) and *delusion* (the slider, the pitchout, the hidden-ball trick and so forth). So you can see why it is not easy for Finch to give himself up to a way of life so opposite to what he has been led to cherish."

Burns is more puzzled by Finch's absorption with the French horn. He suspects that in Tibet Finch may have learned to play the *rkang-gling*, a Tibetan horn made of human thighbones, or perhaps even the Tibetan long trumpet, the *dung-chen*, whose sonorous bellowing in those vast Himalayan defiles is somewhat echoed in the lower registers of the French horn.

Finch has yet to visit the St. Petersburg clubhouse, where the Mets have given him a cubicle between two of their best players.

Photo: Lane Stewart/SI

Finch has yet to visit the St. Petersburg clubhouse, where the Mets have given him a cubicle between two of their best players.

The Met inner circle believes that Finch's problem may be that he cannot decide between baseball and a career as a horn player. In early March the club contacted Bob Johnson, who plays the horn and is the artistic director of the distinguished New York Philomusica ensemble, and asked him to come to St. Petersburg. Johnson was asked to make a clandestine assessment of Finch's ability as a horn player and, even more important, to make contact with him. The idea was that, while praising him for the quality of his horn playing, Johnson should try to persuade him that the lot of a French-horn player (even a very fine one) was not an especially gainful one. Perhaps *that* would tip the scales in favor of baseball.

Johnson came down to St. Petersburg and hung around Florida Avenue for a week. He reported later to SI: "I was being paid for it, so it wasn't bad. I spent a lot of time looking up, so I'd get a nice suntan. Every once in a while I saw Finch coming in and out of the rooming house, dressed to play baseball and carrying a funny-looking black glove. Then one night I heard the French horn. He was playing it in his room. I have heard many great horn players in my career—Bruno Jaenicke, who played for Toscanini; Dennis Brain, the great British virtuoso; Anton Horner of the Philadelphia Orchestra—and I would say Finch was on a par with them. He was playing Benjamin Britten's *Serenade*, for tenor horn and strings—a haunting, tender piece that provides great space for the player—when suddenly he produced a big, evocative *bwong* sound that seemed to shiver the leaves of the trees. Then he shifted to the rondo theme from the trio for violin, piano and horn by Brahms—just sensational. It may have had something to do with the Florida evening and a mild wind coming in over Big Bayou and tree frogs, but it was *remarkable*. I told this to the Mets, and they immediately sent me home—presuming, I guess, that I was going to hire the guy. That's not so farfetched. He can play for the Philomusica anytime."

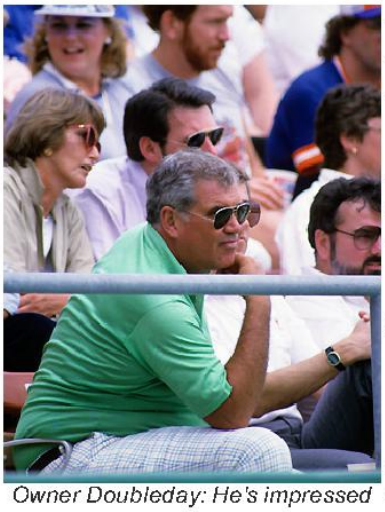
Meanwhile, the Mets are trying other ways to get Finch into a more positive frame of mind about baseball. Inquiries among American lamaseries (there are more than 100 Buddhist societies in the U.S.) have been quietly initiated in the hope of finding monks or priests who are serious baseball fans and who might persuade Finch that the two religions (Buddhism and baseball) are compatible. One plan is to get him into a movie theater to see The Natural, the mystical film about baseball, starring Robert Redford. Another film suggested is the baseball classic *It Happens Every Spring*, starring Ray Milland as a chemist who, by chance, discovers a compound that avoids wood; when applied to a baseball in the film, it makes Milland as effective a pitcher as Finch is in real life.

Conversations with Finch himself have apparently been exercises in futility. All conventional inducements—huge contracts, advertising tie-ins, the banquet circuit, ticker-tape parades, having his picture on a Topps bubble-gum card, chatting on *Kiner's Korner* (the Mets' postgame TV show) and so forth—mean little to him. As do the perks ("You are very kind to offer me a Suzuki motorcycle, but I cannot drive"). He has very politely declined whatever overtures the Mets have offered. The struggle is an absolutely internal one. He will resolve it. Last week he announced that he would let the management know what he was going to do on or around April 1.

Photo: Lane Stewart/SI

Owner Doubleday: He's impressed but frustrated.

Met manager Davey Johnson has seen Finch throw about half a dozen pitches. He was impressed ("If he didn't have this great control, he'd be like the Terminator out there. Hell, that fastball, if off-target on the inside, would carry a batter's kneecap back into the catcher's mitt"), but he is leaving the situation to the front office. "I can handle the pitching rotation; let them handle the monk." He has had one meeting with Finch. "I was going to ask him if we could at least give him a decent fielder's mitt. I asked him why he was so attached to the piece of rag he was using. 'It is,' the guy told me, 'the only one I have.' Actually, I don't see



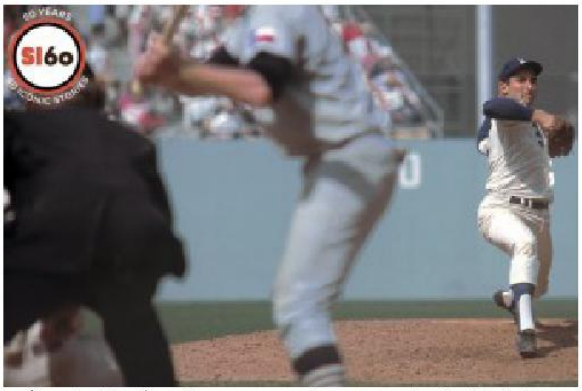
Owner Doubleday: He's impressed but frustrated.

why he needs a better one. All he will ever need it for is to catch the ball for the next pitch. So then I said to him, 'There's only one thing I can offer you, Finch, and that's a fair shake.' "

According to Jay Horwitz, the Mets' public-relations man, Finch smiled at the offer of the fair shake and nodded his head politely —perhaps because it was the only nonmaterial offer made. It did not encroach on Finch's ideas about the renunciation of worldly goods. It was an ingenious, if perhaps unintentional, move on the manager's part.

Nelson Doubleday is especially hopeful about Finch's ultimate decision. "I think we'll bring him around," he said a few days ago. "After all, the guy's not a nut, he's a Harvard man."

In the meantime, the Mets can only wait. Finch periodically turns up at the enclosure. Reynolds is summoned. There are no drills. Sometimes Finch throws for five minutes, instantly at top speed, often for half an hour. Then he leaves. Security around the enclosure has been tight. Since Finch has not signed with the Mets, he is technically a free agent and a potential find for another club. The curious, even Met players, are politely shooed away from the Payson Field enclosure. So far Finch's only association with Met players (other than Reynolds) has been the brief confrontation with Christensen, Cochrane and Dykstra when the front office nervously decided to test his control with a batter standing in the box. If he decides to play baseball, he will leave his private world of the canvas enclosure and join manager Johnson and the rest of the squad. For the first time Gary Carter, the Mets' regular catcher, will face the smoke of the Finch pitch, and the other pitchers will stand around and gawk. The press will have a field day ("How do you spell Siddhartha? How do you grip the ball? How do you keep your balance on the mound?"). The Mets will try to protect him from the glare and help him through the most traumatic of culture shocks, praying that in the process he will not revert and one day disappear.



Sandy Koufax, the youngest person elected into the Baseball Hall of Fame, was the first pitcher to throw four no-hitters and win three Cy Young Awards.

The Left Arm of God: Sandy Koufax was more than just a perfect pitcher

by **Tom Verducci**

Actually, the presence of Hayden (Sidd) Finch in the Mets' training camp raises a number of interesting questions. Suppose the Mets (and Finch himself) can assuage and resolve his mental reservations about playing baseball; suppose he is signed to a contract (one wonders what an ascetic whose major possessions are a bowl, a small rug, a long stick and a French horn might demand); and suppose he comes to New York's Shea Stadium to open the season against the St. Louis Cardinals on April 9. It does not matter that he has never taken a fielding drill with his teammates. Presumably he will mow down the opposition in a perfect game.

Perhaps Willie McGee will get a foul tip. Suppose Johnson discovers that the extraordinary symbiotic relationship of mind and matter is indefatigable—that Finch can pitch day after day at this blinding, unhittable speed. What will happen to Dwight Gooden? Will Carter and the backup catchers last the season? What will it do to major league baseball as it is known today?

Peter Ueberroth, baseball's new commissioner, was contacted by SI in his New York office. He was asked if he had heard anything about the Mets' new phenomenon.

No, he had not. He had heard some rumors about the Mets' camp this spring, but nothing specific.

Did the name Hayden (Sidd) Finch mean anything to him?

Nope.

The commissioner was told that the Mets had a kid who could throw the ball over 150 mph. Unhittable.

Ueberroth took a minute before he asked, "Roll that by me again?"

He was told in as much detail as could be provided about what was going on within the canvas enclosure of the Pay-son compound. It was possible that an absolute superpitcher was coming into baseball—so remarkable that the delicate balance between pitcher and batter could be turned into disarray. What was baseball going to do about it?

"Well, before any decisions, I'll tell you something," the commissioner finally said, echoing what may very well be a nationwide sentiment this coming season. "I'll have to see it to believe it!"

While the Met organization awaits his decision on April 1, Finch spends his non-pitching time communing with the sea and playing the french horn.

While the Met organization awaits his decision on April 1, Finch spends his non-pitching time communing with the sea and playing the french horn.

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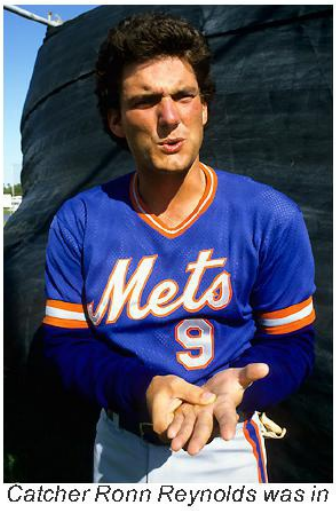


Catcher Ronn Reynolds was in pain after handling a few pitches from Finch.

Catcher Ronn Reynolds was in pain after handling a few pitches from Finch.

Christensen pulled aside a canvas flap and found himself inside a rectangular area about 90 feet long and 30 feet wide, open to the sky, with a home plate set in the ground just in front of him, and down at the far end a pitcher's mound, with a small group of Met front-office personnel standing behind it, facing home plate. Christensen recognized Nelson Double-day, the owner of the Mets, and Frank Cashen, wearing a long-billed fishing cap. He had never seen Doubleday at the training facility before.

Christensen bats righthanded. As he stepped around the plate he nodded to Ronn Reynolds, the stocky reserve catcher who has been with the Met organization since 1980. Reynolds whispered up to him from his crouch, "Kid, you won't believe what you're about to see."

A second flap down by the pitcher's end was drawn open, and a tall, gawky player walked in and stepped up onto the pitcher's mound. He was wearing a small, black fielder's glove on his left hand and was holding a baseball in his right. Christensen had never seen him before. He had blue eyes, Christensen remembers, and a pale, youthful face, with facial muscles that were motionless, like a mask. "You notice it," Christensen explained later, "when a pitcher's jaw isn't working on a chaw or a piece of gum." Then to Christensen's astonishment he saw that the pitcher, pawing at the dirt of the mound to get it smoothed out properly and to his liking, was wearing a heavy hiking boot on his right foot.

Christensen has since been persuaded to describe that first confrontation:

"I'm standing in there to give this guy a target, just waving the bat once or twice out over the plate. He starts his windup. He sways way back, like Juan Marichal, this hiking boot comes clomping over—I thought maybe he was wearing it for balance or something—and he suddenly rears upright like a catapult. The ball is launched from an arm completely straight up and stiff. Before you can blink, the ball is in the catcher's mitt. You hear it crack, and then there's this little bleat from Reynolds."

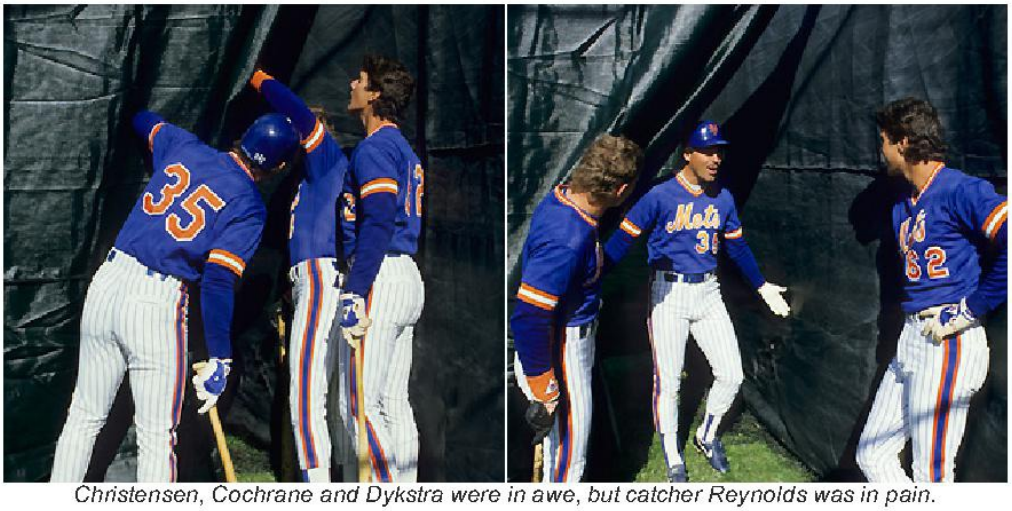
Christensen said the motion reminded him of the extraordinary contortions that he remembered of Goofy's pitching in one of Walt Disney's cartoon classics.

"I never dreamed a baseball could be thrown that fast. The wrist must have a lot to do with it, and all that leverage. You can hardly see the blur of it as it goes by. As for hitting the thing, frankly, I just don't think it's humanly possible. You could send a blind man up there, and maybe he'd do better hitting at the *sound* of the thing."

Christensen's opinion was echoed by both Cochrane and Dykstra, who followed him into the enclosure. When each had done his stint, he emerged startled and awestruck.

Especially Dykstra. Offering a comparison for SI, he reported that out of curiosity he had once

turned up the dials that control the motors of the pitching machine to maximum velocity, thus producing a pitch that went approximately 106 miles per hour. "What I looked at in there," he said, motioning toward the enclosure, "was whistling by another third as fast, I swear."



Christensen, Cochrane and Dykstra were in awe, but catcher Reynolds was in pain.

Photo: Lane Stewart/SI

Christensen, Cochrane and Dykstra were in awe, but catcher Reynolds was in pain.

The phenomenon the three young batters faced, and about whom only Reynolds, Stottlemyre and a few members of the Mets' front office know, is a 28-year-old, somewhat eccentric mystic named Hayden (Sidd) Finch. He may well change the course of baseball history. On St. Patrick's Day, to make sure they were not all victims of a crazy hallucination, the Mets brought in a radar gun to measure the speed of Finch's fastball. The model used was a JUGS Supergun II. It looks like a black space gun with a big snout, weighs about five pounds and is usually pointed at the pitcher from behind the catcher. A glass plate in the back of the gun shows the pitch's velocity—accurate, so the manufacturer claims, to within plus or minus 1 mph. The figure at the top of the gauge is 200 mph. The fastest projectile ever measured by the JUGS (which is named after the oldtimer's descriptive—the "jug-handled" curveball) was a Roscoe Tanner serve that registered 153 mph. The highest number that the JUGS had ever turned for a baseball was 103 mph, which it did, curiously, twice on one day, July 11, at the 1978 All-Star game when both Goose Gossage and Nolan Ryan threw the ball at that speed. On March 17, the gun was handled by Stottlemyre. He heard the pop of the ball in Reynolds's mitt and the little squeak of pain from the catcher. Then the astonishing figure 168 appeared on the glass plate. Stottlemyre remembers whistling in amazement, and then he heard Reynolds say, "Don't tell me, Mel, I don't want to know...."

The Met front office is reluctant to talk about Finch. The fact is, they know very little about him. He has had no baseball career. Most of his life has been spent abroad, except for a short period at Harvard University.

Photo: Lane Stewart/SI

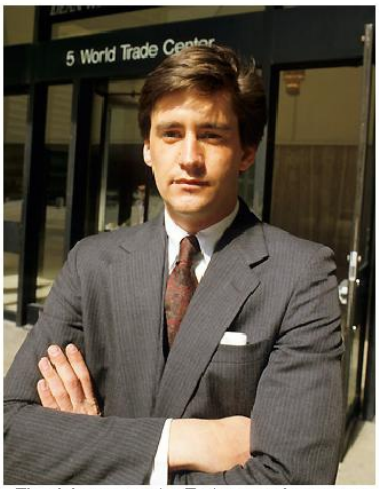
Peterson said Finch kept very little in his Harvard room, most notably a French horn.

The registrar's office at Harvard will release no information about Finch except that in the spring of 1976 he withdrew from the college in midterm. The alumni records in Harvard's Holyoke Center indicate slightly more. Finch spent his early childhood in an orphanage in

Peterson said Finch kept very little in his Harvard room, most notably a French horn.

Leicester, England and was adopted by a foster parent, the eminent archaeologist Francis Whyte-Finch, who was killed in an airplane crash while on an expedition in the Dhaulagiri mountain area of Nepal. At the time of the tragedy, Finch was in his last year at the Stowe School in Buckingham, England, from which he had been accepted into Harvard. Apparently, though, the boy decided to spend a year in the general area of the plane crash in the Himalayas (the plane was never actually found) before he returned to the West and entered Harvard in 1975, dropping for unknown reasons the "Whyte" from his name. Hayden Finch's picture is not in the freshman yearbook. Nor, of course, did he play baseball at Harvard, having departed before the start of the spring season.

His assigned roommate was Henry W. Peterson, class of 1979, now a stockbroker in New York with Dean Witter, who saw very little of Finch. "He was almost never there," Peterson told SI. "I'd wake up morning after morning and look across at his bed, which had a woven native carpet of some sort on it—I have an idea he told me it was made of yak fur—and never had the sense it had been slept in. Maybe he slept on the floor. Actually, my assumption was that he had a girl in Somerville or something, and stayed out there. He had almost no belongings. A knapsack. A bowl he kept in the corner on the floor. A couple of wool shirts, always very clean, and maybe a pair or so of blue jeans. One pair of hiking boots. I always had the feeling that he was very bright. He had a French horn in an old case. I don't know much about French-horn music but he played beautifully. Sometimes he'd play it in the bath. He knew any number of languages. He was so adept at them that he'd be talking in English, which he spoke in this distinctive singsong way, quite Oriental, and he'd use a phrase like "pied-à-terre" and without knowing it he'd sail along in French for a while until he'd drop in a German word like "angst" and he'd shift to that language. For any kind of sustained conversation you had to hope he wasn't going to use a foreign buzz word—especially out of the Eastern languages he knew, like Sanskrit—because that was the end of it as far as I was concerned."



Finch's roomate Peterson is now a stockbroker in New York with Dean

Photo: Lane Stewart/SI

Finch's roomate Peterson is now a stockbroker in New York with Dean Witter.

When Peterson was asked why he felt Finch had left Harvard, he shrugged his shoulders. "I came back one afternoon, and everything was gone—the little rug, the horn, the staff.... Did I tell you that he had this long kind of shepherd's crook standing in the corner? Actually, there was so little stuff to begin with that it was hard to tell he wasn't there anymore. He left a curious note on the floor. It turned out to be a Zen koan, which is one of those puzzles which cannot be solved by the intellect. It's the famous one about the live goose in the bottle. How do you get the goose

Witter. out of the bottle without hurting it or breaking the glass? The answer is, There, it's out!' I heard from him once, from Egypt. He sent pictures. He was on his way to Tibet to study."

Finch's entry into the world of baseball occurred last July in Old Orchard Beach, Maine, where the Mets' AAA farm club, the Tidewater Tides, was in town playing the Guides. After the first game of the series, Bob Schaefer, the Tides' manager, was strolling back to the hotel. He has very distinct memories of his first meeting with Finch: "I was walking by a park when suddenly this guy—nice-looking kid, clean-shaven, blue jeans, big boots—appears alongside. At first, I think maybe he wants an autograph or to chat about the game, but no, he scrabbles around in a kind of knapsack, gets out a scuffed-up baseball and a small, black leather fielder's mitt that looks like it came out of the back of some Little League kid's closet. This guy says to me, 'I have learned the art of the pitch....' Some odd phrase like that, delivered in a singsong voice, like a chant, kind of what you hear in a Chinese restaurant if there are some Chinese in there.

Finch visited Egypt on his way to Tibet and later sent these photos to Peterson.

Photo: Lane Stewart/SI

Finch visited Egypt on his way to Tibet and later sent these photos to Peterson.

"I am about to hurry on to the hotel when this kid points out a soda bottle on top of a fence post about the same distance home plate is from the pitcher's rubber. He rears way back, comes around and pops the ball at it. Out there on that fence post the soda bottle *explodes*. It disintegrates like a rifle bullet hit it—just little specks of vaporized glass in a *puff*. Beyond the post I could see the ball bouncing across the grass of the park until it stopped about as far away as I can hit a three-wood on a good day.

"I said, very calm, 'Son, would you mind showing me that again?'

"And he did. He disappeared across the park to find the ball—it had gone so far, he was after it for what seemed 15 minutes. In the meantime I found a tin can from a trash container and set it up for him. He did it again—just kicked that can off the fence like it was hit with a baseball bat. It wasn't the accuracy of the pitch so much that got to me but the speed. It was like the tin can got belted as soon as the ball left the guy's fingertips. Instantaneous. I thought to myself, 'My god, that kid's thrown the ball about 150 mph. Nolan Ryan's fastball is a change-up compared to what this kid just threw.'

"Well, what happens next is that we sit and talk, this kid and I, out there on the grass of the park. He sits with the big boots tucked under his legs, like one of those yoga guys, and he

tells me he's not sure he wants to play big league baseball, but he'd like to give it a try. He's never played before, but he knows the rules, even the infield-fly rule, he tells me with a smile, and he knows he can throw a ball with complete accuracy and enormous velocity. He won't tell me how he's done this except that he 'learned it in the mountains, in a place called Po, in Tibet.' That is where he said he had learned to pitch...up in the mountains, flinging rocks and meditating. He told me his name was Hayden Finch, but he wanted to be called Sidd Finch. I said that most of the Sids we had in baseball came from Brooklyn. Or the Bronx. He said his Sidd came from 'Siddhartha,' which means 'Aim Attained' or 'The Perfect Pitch.' That's what he had learned, how to throw the perfect pitch. O.K. by me, I told him, and that's what I put on the scouting report, 'Sidd Finch.' And I mailed it in to the front office."

George Plimpton

SI 60: The story behind and reaction to 'The Curious Case Of Sidd Finch'

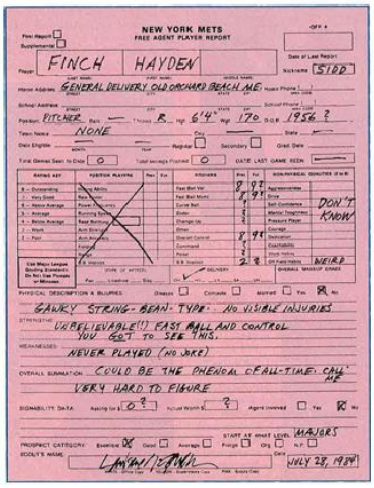
The reaction in New York once the report arrived was one of complete disbelief. The assumption was that Schaefer was either playing a joke on his superiors or was sending in the figment of a very powerful wish-fulfillment dream. But Schaefer is one of the most respected men in the Met organization. Over the past seven years, the clubs he has managed have won six championships. Dave Johnson, the Met manager, phoned him. Schaefer verified what he had seen in Old Orchard Beach. He told Johnson that sometimes he, too, thought he'd had a dream, but he hoped the Mets would send Finch an invitation so that, at the very least, his own mind would be put at rest.

When a rookie is invited to training camp, he gets a packet of instructions in late January. The Mets sent off the usual literature to Finch at the address Schaefer had supplied them. To their surprise, Finch wrote back with a number of stipulations. He insisted he would report to the Mets camp in St. Petersburg only with the understanding that: 1) there were no contractual commitments; 2) during off-hours he be allowed to keep completely to himself; 3) he did not wish to be involved in any of the team drills or activities; 4) he would show the Mets his pitching prowess in privacy; 5) the whole operation in St. Petersburg was to be kept as secret as possible, with no press or photographs.

The reason for these requirements—he stated in a letter written (according to a source in the Met front office) in slightly stilted, formal and very polite terminology—was that he had not decided whether he actually wanted to play baseball. He wrote apologetically that there were mental adjustments to be made. He did not want to raise the Mets' expectations, much less those of the fans, and then dash them. Therefore it was best if everything were carried on in secret or, as he put it in his letter, "in camera."

At first, the inclination of the Met front office was to disregard this nonsense out of hand and tell Finch either to apply, himself, through normal procedures or forget it. But the extraordinary statistics in the scouting report and Schaefer's verification of them were too

intriguing to ignore. On Feb. 2, Finch's terms were agreed to by letter. Mick McFadyen, the Mets' groundskeeper in St. Petersburg, was ordered to build the canvas enclosure in a far corner of the Payson complex, complete with a pitcher's mound and plate. Reynolds's ordeal was about to start.


NEW YORK METS
FREE AGENT PLAYER REPORT

FINCH HAYDEN

GENERAL DELIVERY OLD ORCHARD BEACH ME

PITCHER B 6'4" 170 DOB 1956 ?

NONE

DON'T KNOW

WEIRD

GAWKY STRING-BEAN TYPE. NO VISIBLE INJURIES

UNBELIEVABLE(!) EASY ARM AND CONTROL YOU GOT TO SEE THIS.

NEVER PLAYED (NO JOKE)

COULD BE THE PHENOM OF ALL-TIME. CALL ME

VERY HARD TO FIGURE

MAJORS

JULY 28, 1984

Reynolds is a sturdy, hardworking catcher (he has been described as looking like a high school football tackle). He has tried to be close-lipped about Finch, but his experiences inside the canvas enclosure have made it difficult for him to resist answering a few questions. He first heard about Finch from the Mets' general manager. "Mr. Cashen called me into his office one day in early March," Reynolds disclosed. "I was nervous because I thought I'd been traded. He was wearing a blue bow tie. He leaned across the desk and whispered to me that it was very likely I was going to be a part of baseball history. Big doings! The Mets had this rookie coming to camp and I was going to be his special catcher. All very hush-hush.

"Well, I hope nothing like that guy ever comes down the pike again. The first time I see him is inside the canvas coop, out there on the pitcher's mound, a thin kid getting ready to throw, and I'm thinking he'll want to toss a couple of warmup pitches. So I'm standing behind the plate without a mask, chest protector, pads or anything, holding my glove up, sort of half-assed, to give him a target to throw at...and suddenly I see this windup like a pretzel gone loony, and the next thing, I've been blown two or three feet back, and I'm sitting on the ground with the ball in my glove. My catching hand feels like it's been hit with a sledgehammer."

He was asked: "Does he throw a curveball? A slider? Or a sinker?"

Reynolds grinned and shook his head. "Good questions! Don't ask me."

"Does it make a sound?"

"Yeah, a little *pft*, *pft-boom*!"

Stottlemyre has been in direct charge of Finch's pitching regimen. His own playing career ended in the spring of 1975 with a rotator-cuff injury, which makes him especially sensitive to the strain that a pitching motion can put on the arm. Although as close-lipped as the rest of the staff, Stottlemyre does admit that Finch has developed a completely revolutionary pitching style. He told SI: "I don't understand the mechanics of it. Anyone who tries to throw the ball that way should fall flat on his back. But I've seen it. I've seen it a hundred times. It's the most awesome thing that has ever happened in baseball."

Asked what influences might have contributed to Finch's style and speed, Stottlemyre said, "Well, *cricket* may have something to do with it. Finch has taken the power and speed of the running throw of the cricket bowler and has somehow harnessed all that energy to the pitching rubber. The wrist snap off that stiff arm is incredible. I haven't talked to him but once or twice. I asked him if he ever thought of snapping the *arm*, like baseball pitchers, rather

than the wrist: It would increase the velocity.

"He replied, very polite, you know, with a little bob of the head: 'I undertake as a rule of training to refrain from injury to living things.'

"He's right, of course. It's Ronn Reynolds I feel sorry for. Every time that ball comes in, first you hear this *smack* sound of the ball driving into the pocket of the mitt, and then you hear this little gasp, this ai yee!—the catcher, poor guy, his whole body shakin' like an angina's hit it. It's the most piteous thing I've ever heard, short of a trapped rabbit."

Hayden (Sidd) Finch arrived in St. Petersburg on Feb. 7. Most of the rookies and minor-leaguers stay at the Edgewater Beach Inn. Assuming that Finch would check in with the rest of the early arrivals, the Mets were surprised when he telephoned and announced that he had leased a room in a small boarding-house just off Florida Avenue near a body of water on the bay side called Big Bayou. Because his private pitching compound had been constructed across the city and Finch does not drive, the Mets assigned him a driver, a young Tampa Bay resident, Eliot Posner, who picks him up in the morning and returns him to Florida Avenue or, more often, to a beach on the Gulf where, Posner reports, Finch, still in his baseball outfit and carrying his decrepit glove, walks down to the water's edge and, motionless, stares out at the windsurfers. Inevitably, he dismisses Posner and gets back to his boardinghouse on his own.

Butterfield enjoys Finch's hom music, which fills her boardinghouse each night.

Photo: Lane Stewart/SI

Butterfield enjoys Finch's horn music, which fills her boardinghouse each night.

The Met management has found out very little about his life in St. Petersburg. Mrs. Roy Butterfield, his landlady, reports (as one might expect) that "he lives very simply. Sometimes he comes in the front door, sometimes the back. Sometimes I'm not even sure he spends the night. I think he sleeps on the floor—his bed is always neat as a pin. He has his own rug, a small little thing. I never have had a boarder who brought his own rug. He has a soup bowl. Not much, is what I say. Of course, he plays the French horn. He plays it very beautifully and, thank goodness, softly. The notes fill the house. Sometimes I think the notes are coming out of my television set."

Probably the member of the Met staff who has gotten the closest to Finch is Posner. When Posner returns to the Payson complex, inevitably someone rushes out from the Mets' offices asking, "Did he say anything? What did he say?"

Posner takes out a notebook.

"Today he said, 'When your mind is empty like a canyon you will know the power of the Way.' "

"Anything else?"

"No."

While somewhat taxed by Finch's obvious eccentricities, and with the exception of the obvious burden on the catchers, the Mets, it seems, have an extraordinary property in their camp. But the problem is that no one is sure if Finch really wants to play. He has yet to make up his mind; his only appearances are in the canvas enclosure. Reynolds moans in despair when he is told Finch has arrived. Sometimes his ordeal is short-lived. After Finch nods politely at Reynolds and calls down "*Namas-te!*" (which means "greetings" in Sanskrit), he throws only four or five of the terrifying pitches before, with a gentle smile, he announces "*Namas-te!*" (it also means "farewell") and gets into the car to be driven away.

One curious manifestation of Finch's reluctance to commit himself entirely to baseball has been his refusal to wear a complete baseball uniform. Because he changes in his rooming house, no one is quite sure what he will be wearing when he steps through the canvas flap into the enclosure. One afternoon he turned up sporting a tie hanging down over the logo on his jersey, and occasionally—as Christensen noticed—he wears a hiking boot on his right foot. Always, he wears his baseball cap back to front—the conjecture among the Met officials is that this sartorial behavior is an indication of his ambivalence about baseball.

Burns has identified Finch as an aspirant monk.

Photo: Lane Stewart/SI

Burns has identified Finch as an aspirant monk.

In hopes of understanding more about him, in early March the Mets called in a specialist in Eastern religions, Dr. Timothy Burns, the author of, among other treatises, *Satori*, or *Four Years in a Tibetan Lamasery*. Not allowed to speak personally with Finch for fear of "spooking him," Burns was able only to speculate about the Mets' newest player.

According to sources from within the Met organization, Burns told a meeting of the club's top brass that the strange ballplayer in their midst was very likely a trapas, or aspirant monk.

A groan is said to have gone up from Nelson Doubleday. Burns said that Finch was almost surely a disciple of Tibet's great poet-saint Lama Milaraspa, who was born in the 11th century and died in the shadow of Mount Everest. Burns told them that Milaraspa was a great yogi who could manifest an astonishing phenomenon: He could produce "internal heat," which allowed him to survive snowstorms and intense cold, wearing only a thin robe of white cotton. Finch does something similar—an apparent deflection of the huge forces of the universe into throwing a baseball with bewildering accuracy and speed through the process of siddhi, namely the yogic mastery of mind-body. He mentioned that *The Book of Changes*, the *I*

The Davy Crockett Tactical Nuclear Recoilless Rifle

World War II saw the first extensive developments of the recoilless rifle. Appearing to be a bazooka or man portable rocket launcher, the recoilless rifle is actually a light infantry artillery piece designed to fire large caliber shells. To avoid the overwhelming recoil of firing, say, a 105mm shell, a recoiless rifle is designed to direct most gasses out the rear of the weapon, thus reducing it's recoil and making it manageable by regular infantry.

In the 1950's, the US Army took the firepower of the recoilless rifle to a whole new level by developing the M-28 and M-29 Davy Crockett Weapons System. Invented to fend back the Soviet hordes expected to invade Europe during the Cold War, the Davy Crockett was a recoilless rifle designed to fire a small tactical nuclear warhead. It might sound extreme, but the Davy Crockett was not that big of a warhead, at least not for a nuclear weapon. Firing a 51 lb W-54 warhead, the explosion produced by the Davy Crockett had a yield somewhere between 10-20 tons of TNT. By contrast, the bomb dropped on Hiroshima had a yield equivalent of 16 kilotons of TNT. However, the deadliness of the Davy Crockett was not in its explosive power, but the radiation produced by the weapon. Within 150 meters of the blast the weapon produced enough radiation to instantly kill all exposed. Lethal radiation levels were emitted up to 500 meters, and incapacitating levels were emitted hundreds of meters more.

Compact and mobile, the Davy Crockett could be mounted on a tripod operated by a 3 man crew, or mounted on vehicles such as jeeps and armored personnel carriers. The M-28 launcher had a range of around 1.7 miles while the M-29 launcher had a range or 2.5 miles. They were deployed in Europe and Asia between 1961 and 1971, with around 2,100 produced. By the late 1960's they were decommissioned as the resulting radiation of the weapon posed as much as a risk to its crew as it did the enemy.

The day a Holocaust survivor got revenge on his tormentor

By Martin Greenfield

November 9, 2014 | 3:21am

Modal Trigger

He survived the savagery of the Holocaust, made it to America with barely a penny and became a world-famous tailor in Brooklyn, dressing celebrities and presidents. In his new memoir, “Measure of a Man,” Martin Greenfield tells the story of his extraordinary life. In this excerpt, he explains how the concentration camps nearly stripped him of his humanity at age 16 — and the day he got it back.

While at Buchenwald, the SS assigned me to work in the munitions factory. But early one morning after roll call, a soldier placed me on a 12-prisoner team to perform repairs outside the camp in nearby Weimar.

Working in the city was a welcome distraction from camp life. Sometimes you got lucky and spotted a potato in a field or smuggled a trinket to trade for food. Either way, it was a chance to see the sky, escape the stench of rotting corpses, and confirm that there was still a world beyond the barbed wire.

We loaded our gear and marched the few miles to Weimar. The soldiers stopped us in front of a bombed-out mansion, home to the mayor of Weimar. A big black Mercedes sat out front. The soldiers commanded us to sift the rubble, clear the debris, and begin repairs on the mansion.

I walked alone to the back of the estate to assess the damage. Dusty piles of broken bricks lay scattered across the yard. Seeing the cellar door ajar, I slowly opened it. A shaft of

sunlight filled the dank cellar. On one side of the space sat a wooden cage wrapped in chicken wire. I walked closer and noticed two quivering rabbits inside the cage.

“They’re still alive!” I said to myself with surprise.

Inside the cage were the remains of the rabbits’ dinner. I unlatched the cage and pulled out a wilted leaf and carrot nub. The lettuce was browning and slimy, the carrot still moist from the rabbits’ gnawing. Excited, I wolfed down the lettuce and tried to crack the chunk of carrot in half with my teeth.

Then and there I made a vow to myself: If I survived Buchenwald, I would return and kill the mayor’s wife.

My luck was short-lived. “What are you doing?” a voice yelled.

I whipped my head around toward the door. A gorgeous, smartly dressed blond woman holding a baby stood silhouetted in the door frame. It was the mayor of Weimar’s wife.

“I . . . I found your rabbits!” I stammered with a cheerful nervousness. “They’re alive and safe!”

“Why in the hell are you stealing my rabbits’ food?” barked the woman. “Animals!” I stood silent and stared at the floor.

“I’m reporting this immediately!” she said, stomping away. My heart pounded in my emaciated chest. A few minutes later, an SS soldier ordered me to come out of the cellar. I knew what was coming, and the knowing made it all the worse.

“Down on the ground, you dog! Fast!” yelled the German. He gripped his baton and bludgeoned my back. I do not know whether the mayor’s wife watched the beating. Given her cruelty, why would she want to miss it? On the hike back to Buchenwald, I replayed the scene over and over in my mind.

How could a woman carrying her own child find a walking skeleton saving her pets and have him beaten for nibbling on rotten animal food? I thought.

In that moment, my numbness to death melted. In its place rose an alien blood lust, a hunger for vengeance unlike any I had ever known. The surge of adrenaline and rush of rage felt good inside my withered frame.

Then and there I made a vow to myself: If I survived Buchenwald, I would return and kill the mayor’s wife.

On April 11, 1945, 3:15 p.m., the Allies liberated Buchenwald.

Modal Trigger

Physically, I was free. Emotionally, I was in chains. I’d made a promise to myself. And I intended to keep it.

Residents from Weimar avert their eyes as American forces make them walk past a pile of corpses at the Buchenwald concentration camp. Photo: Getty Images

I located two Jewish boys who were well enough to make the walk to Weimar. I told them what the woman did and what I was prepared to do about it. We could rummage machine guns from the mountain of German weapons seized by the inmates and Americans that lay in piles on the Appelplatz.

The streets outside camp were electric with an ominous sense of disquiet. A smattering of prisoners in striped pajamas ambled in search of noncamp food. I kept my eyes open for SS. We gripped our guns and got to Weimar as quickly as possible.

My heartbeat quickened the closer we got to the mayor's house. Pent-up rage from all I had seen and experienced surged through me. Killing the mayor's wife could not repay the Nazis for the terror they had inflicted on us. But it was a start.

We walked a few miles before turning down the street the mayor's home was on. I pointed to a house several paces down the road: "I think that's it." The big black Mercedes was not out front.

It took me a moment to make sure I had the right house.

"The car isn't here. Looks like the house is empty," I said. "The plan is we take our guns and go in through the side door. Then we hide and wait so I can kill the blond bitch that had me beaten."

The boys nodded.

We crept up to the side door. I slowly turned the knob. It was unlocked. I entered the house quietly, with my gun drawn. The boys fell in behind me and eased the door shut. We stepped softly to mute the sounds of our wooden clogs on the floor.

"Hello?" a voice around a corner said. "Hello?"

"You had me beaten because of the rabbits. I'm here to shoot you!" I said [to the mayor's wife], sounding like an SS.

Just then the beautiful blond woman turned the corner and let out a screech. She had the baby in her arms again.

"Don't shoot!" she screamed. "Don't shoot!"

"Remember me?!" I yelled. "Do you?!"

Her blond tresses shook violently. She hid her face behind her upraised hand as if shielding herself from the sun.

“You had me beaten because of the rabbits. I’m here to shoot you!” I said, sounding like an SS.

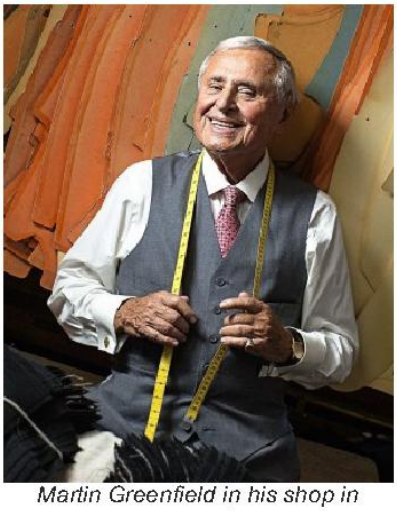
“No! Please!” she quavered. “The baby, please!”

I aimed the machine gun at her chest. The baby wailed. My finger hovered above the trigger.

“Shoot her!” one of the boys said. “Shoot her!” The woman’s outstretched hand trembled in the air. My heart pounded against my chest like a hammer.

“Shoot her!” the other boy yelled. “That’s what we came here for! Do it!”

I froze. I couldn’t do it. I could not pull the trigger. That was the moment I became human again. All the old teachings came rushing back. I had been raised to believe that life was a precious gift from God, that women and children must be protected.



Martin Greenfield in his shop in Brooklyn. Photo: Getty Images

Modal Trigger

Had I pulled the trigger, I would have been like Mengele. He, too, had faced mothers holding babies — my mother holding my baby brother — and sentenced both to gruesome deaths. My moral upbringing would not allow me to become an honorary member of the SS.

Still, extending mercy felt weak. I tried to save face in front of the boys. If I couldn’t be a hardened killer, I could at least be a car thief. “Where is the car?” I yelled.

“There is nothing,” she said.

“Where is it?!” I barked.

“It’s not here,” she said.

I lowered the gun and stomped out of the house and went around back.

“You made us come here for nothing?” one of the boys huffed.

“I couldn’t shoot her,” I said. “She had a baby!”

“How many babies did they kill?” he quipped. He had a point.

We walked to the large barn behind the house and unlatched the heavy wooden doors. There, covered with hay, sat the big black Mercedes. “That lying Nazi bitch!” one of the boys yelled. I was livid. I’d spared her life and she lied to my face.

“Wait here,” I told the boys. I marched back in the house, gun drawn, and found her. “This time, I’m really going to shoot you,” I said. “Give me the keys!” She gave me the keys. I jogged back to the boys and the car. “I got them,” I said rattling the keys in my hand.

“Who knows how to drive?” one of the boys asked.

‘I froze. I couldn’t do it. I could not pull the trigger. That was the moment I became human again. All the old teachings came rushing back.’

- Martin Greenfield

“Don’t worry, I do,” I said. We brushed off the hay and hopped in the car.

“Hurry up! Let’s get out of here,” one of the boys said.

What a sight we must have been: three teenage Jews in striped prisoner uniforms, armed with machine guns, driving a black Mercedes in Weimar, Germany, on our way back to the Buchenwald concentration camp. We smiled, laughed, and talked tough like the men we weren’t.

“Did you see how scared she was?” one boy said excitedly. “I bet she made in her underwear!” We chuckled and drove on.

“Look!” one of the boys said pointing out the window. “Two girls!” I pulled the car to the side of the street.

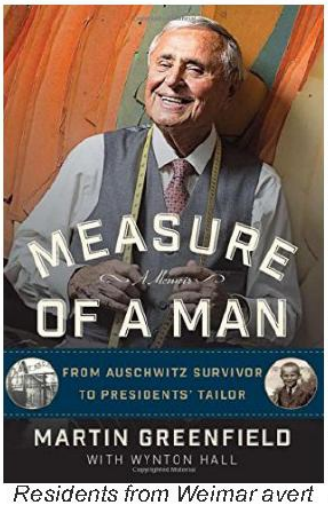
We invited the German girls to take a ride. They must have been so mesmerized by the Mercedes that our raggedy uniforms failed to give them pause. To my surprise, they hopped in. This was the closest any of us had been to attractive girls in a long, long time. They rode with us a few blocks before we dropped them off.

I contemplated ditching the car. After all, we were driving the mayor of Weimar’s Mercedes. If that didn’t give us away, the license plates would. But then I thought, What the hell? When’s the next time you will get to drive a Mercedes?

So I drove the car all the way back to Buchenwald. In fact, I drove straight through the camp gates. Only this time, the irony of the slogan emblazoned across the gates — “To each what he deserves!” — made me laugh.

Prisoners stood motionless and stared as we coasted into camp. They must have assumed an important dignitary or the mayor of Weimar himself would step out of the fancy car. When they saw our striped prisoner uniforms, they rushed us. “How did you get a Mercedes?” someone asked.

Modal Trigger



Residents from Weimar avert their eyes as American forces make them walk past a pile of corpses at the Buchenwald concentration camp. Photo: Getty Images Photo: Getty Images Martin Greenfield in his shop in Brooklyn. Photo: Getty Images Photo: Getty Images Greenfield was President Dwight Eisenhower's tailor, and would often slip letters of advice into his suit pockets. Photo: Getty Images Photo: Getty Images

"Well," I said smiling, "we just got it."

Throughout my life I had heard that everything happens for a reason, that God's ways were mysterious but purposeful. I believed that. But something I read decades after my showdown at the mayor of Weimar's house proved to me that in the end, in this life or the one after, God ultimately achieves justice.

A friend shared with me an article from a 1945 issue of Life magazine about Nazi suicides following the war. Here is a portion of what it said: "In the last days of the war the overwhelming realization of utter defeat was too much for many Germans. Stripped of the bayonets and bombast which had given them power, they could not face a reckoning with either their conquerors or their consciences. These found the quickest and surest escape in what Germans call Selbstmord, self-murder . . . In Hitler's Reich, Germans stopped killing others and began killing themselves. In Weimar, the mayor and his wife, after seeing Buchenwald atrocities, slashed their wrists."

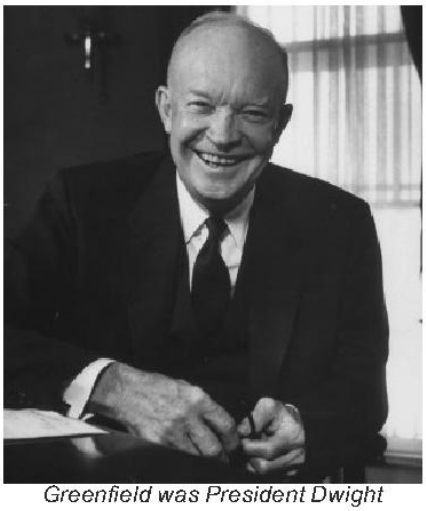
That day at the mayor's home, God pricked my conscience. In so doing, He spared me the guilt and shame of killing the mayor of Weimar's wife.

I didn't need to kill her. She did it for me.

Excerpted with permission from "Measure of a Man: From Auschwitz Survivor to Presidents' Tailor" (Regnery) by Martin Greenfield with Wynton Hall, out this week.

Call it a pocket veto

Martin Greenfield would make suits for presidents from Gerald Ford to George W. Bush to Barack Obama — and, most notoriously, Dwight Eisenhower.



Greenfield was President Dwight

Modal Trigger

Greenfield was eternally grateful to Eisenhower for liberating Buchenwald. But he never got to meet the president personally — he made the suits in Brooklyn.

During the Suez Canal crisis, Greenfield was frustrated and thought the US needed a stronger response. So he wrote an anonymous note and left it in the pocket of a jacket he was making for Eisenhower.

Greenfield did this multiple times until his boss, Mr. Goldman, returned from a visit to the White House. "The president loves the suits. But he said someone keeps writing and leaving

Eisenhower's tailor, and would often slip letters of advice into his suit pockets. Photo: Getty Images

notes in his jacket pockets. He said there were even letters in the golf pants we made him. You wouldn't happen to know anything about that?" Goldman asked.

"I write nice notes!" Greenfield protested. "And I give him good advice, if only he would listen to me."

The notes stopped, though an amused Eisenhower told reporters how a Brooklyn tailor was slipping him foreign-policy advice.

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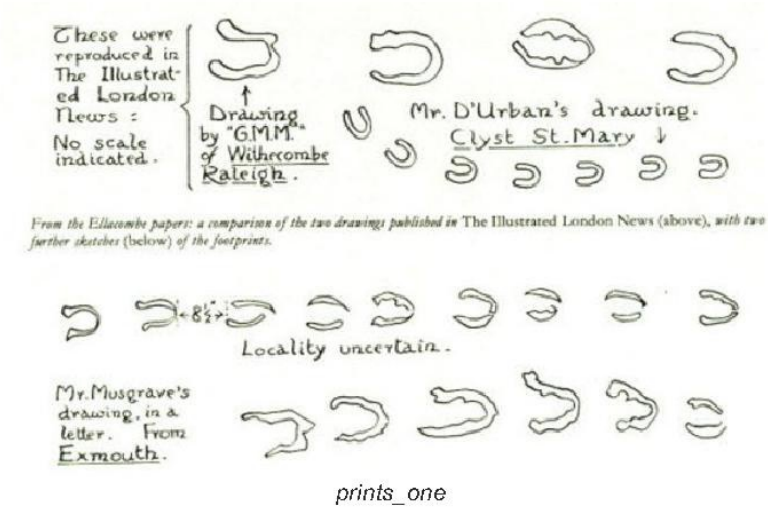
The Devil's Footprints: February 1855 In Devon, England - Who Forted? Magazine

By Chris Chaos on November 20, 2014

whofortedblog.com



From the Ellacombe papers: a comparison of the two drawings published in The Illustrated London News (above), *with two further sketches* (below) *of the footprints.*

prints_one

In February of 1855, around the area of East and South Devon, England The Devil's Footprints were found in the snow. These hoof-like prints covered approximately 60 to 100 miles, depending on who was telling the story. Just note this would be considered impossible for one person to accomplish in a day in the 19th century. These appeared to be cloven hooves, leading people to panic that Satan was among them. Each track measured at 4 inches long, 3 inches wide and approximately 8-16 inches apart in single file. Nearly 30 locations reported these mysterious footprints. They tracked over houses, frozen lakes and other obstacles. Some of the rooftop tracks travelled up to roofs, only to exit from pipes that were a mere 4 inches in diameter.

FOOT-MARKS ON THE SNOW, IN DEVON.

(*From a Correspondent.*)

As many of your readers have perused, I have no doubt, with much interest, the paragraph which appeared in several of the papers of last week, relative to the mysterious foot-marks left upon the snow during the night of Thursday, the 8th, in the parishes of Exmouth, Lympstone, and Woodbury, as also in Dawlish, Torquay, Totnes, and other places on the other side of the estuary of the Exe, in the county of Devon, extending over a tract of country of thirty or forty miles, or probably more; and as the paragraph I allude to does not fully detail the mysterious affair, it may probably be interesting to many to have a more particular account—which I think this unusual occurrence well deserves.

The marks which appeared on the snow (which lay very thinly on the ground at the time), and which were seen on the Friday morning, to all appearance were the perfect impression of a donkey's hoof—the length 4 inches by 2½ inches; but, instead of progressing as that animal would have done (or indeed as any other would have done), four right and left, it appeared that feet had followed foot, in a single line; the distance from each tread being eight inches, or rather more—the foot-marks in every parish being exactly the same size, and the steps the same length. This mysterious visitor generally only passed over down or across each garden or court-yard, and did so in nearly all the houses in many parts of the several towns above mentioned, as also in the farms scattered about; this regular track passing in some instances over the roofs of houses, and hay-ricks, and very high walls (one fourteen feet), without displacing the snow on either side or altering the distance between the feet, and passing on as if the wall had not been any impediment. The gardens with high fences or walls, and gates locked, were equally visited as those open and unprotected. Now, when we consider the distance that must have been gone over to have left these marks—I may say in almost every garden, on door-steps, through the extensive woods of Lincombe, open commons, in enclosures and farms—the actual progress must have exceeded a hundred miles. It is very easy for people to laugh at these appearances, and account for them in an idle way.

devils footprints article

This extract from the article is quite interesting.

"It appears on Thursday night last, there was a very heavy snowfall in the neighbourhood of Exeter and the South of Devon. On the following morning the inhabitants of the above towns were surprised at discovering the footmarks of some strange and mysterious animal endowed with the power of ubiquity, as the footprints were to be seen in all kinds of unaccountable places – on the tops of houses and narrow walls, in gardens and court-yards, enclosed by high walls and pailings, as well in open fields."

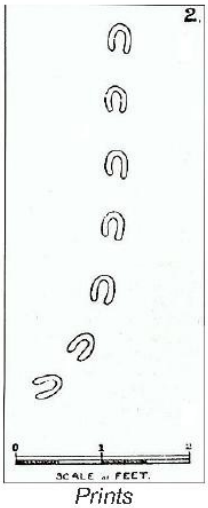
There is very little concrete evidence from which researchers can draw conclusions. Being the 19th century, video cameras, smartphones, and other recording devices were unknown to the populace. The only known documents associated with the Devil's Tracks came to light in the Transactions of the Devonshire Association from 1950. These documents were found with the letters from Reverend G.M. Musgrove marked "not for publication" with drawings of the footprints.

The reverend wrote a letter to the Illustrated London News: "In the course of a few days a report was circulated that a couple of kangaroos escaped from a private menagerie (Mr. Fische's, I believe) at Sidmouth." It seems, though, nobody investigated if there were any escaped kangaroos, let alone how they could've crossed the estuary. Musgrove said he only

came up with the story, to distract his parishioners' concerns about a visit from the devil.

> I found a very apt opportunity to mention the name of kangaroo, in allusion to the report then current. I certainly did not pin my faith to that version of the mystery … but the state of the public mind of the villagers … dreading to go out after sunset … under the conviction that this was the Devil's work … rendered it very desirable that a turn should be given to such a degraded and vitiated notion … and I was thankful that a kangaroo … [served] to disperse ideas so derogatory…1

In 1994, Mike Dash collected the source material, compiling them for *Fortean Studies* in the paper "The Devil's Hoofmarks: Source Material on the Great Devon Mystery of 1855".2



Prints

According to Mike Dash, in his Fortean Studies article, he concludes there was no single source for these "hoof marks". Some tracks were probably hoaxes, others were from "common quadrupeds" like donkeys and ponies, and others from wood mice . He admits these can not explain all the reported marks, and "the mystery remains".

Geoffrey Household suggests the Devonport Dockyard may have accidentally released an experimental balloon, trailing mooring ropes which could've made the prints. The grandson of a man who worked at Devonport, Major Carter, claims the incident was quieted since some properties were damaged in the process. The shape of the prints might explain away with the balloon theory, but could a balloon have traveled in this random pattern without getting caught on something? Regarding the wood mice theory, when a mouse jumps, the motion and position of their limbs can leave a track resembling that of a hoofed animal. He wasn't the first to present the idea, having been outlined in a March 1855 edition of *The Illustrated London News*.

An artist's impression.

In the summer of 1855, one 'Professor Owen' proposed the footprints were from a badger(!), arguing the animal was 'the only plantigrade quadruped we have in this island' and it 'leaves a footprint larger than would be supposed from its size'. The number of footprints, he suggests 'it is improbable that one badger only should have been awake and hungry' and added that the animal was 'a stealthy prowler and most active and enduring in search of food'.

Finally, the tracks might've been a case of mass hysteria where people were sharing stories out of hand, the news media picking up on the trends, making a mountain out of a molehill.

The diplomat's portable handbook (wheelbarrow required)

5 December 2014 bbc.com

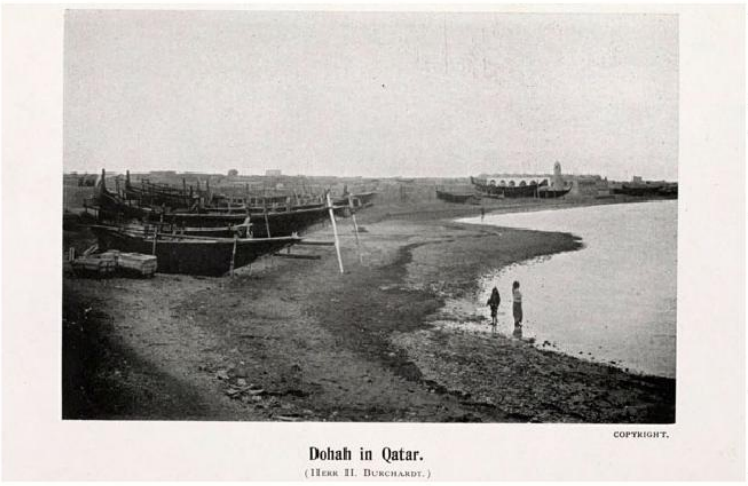
If knowledge is power, then the British government's secret gazetteer of the Gulf, known simply as "Lorimer" after its author, epitomises the scale of imperial ambition. Intended to be a portable handbook, it was anything but, writes Matthew Teller.

It's one of the 20th Century's most unusual books. Commissioned in 1903 as a six-month project to produce a "convenient and portable handbook" for British diplomats, John Gordon Lorimer's Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia covered 5,000 pages when it finally emerged 12 years later, in six giant volumes.

Lorimer, born in Glasgow, served as a colonial administrator in India before his transfer to Baghdad and then the Gulf. He took five years over the first volume, an obsessively detailed listing of towns and villages that records everything from topography to demography.

To stop such a wealth of specialist knowledge falling into the wrong hands, it was immediately classified "secret", circulated only among British officials.

"The general appearance of Doha is unattractive; the lanes are narrow and irregular, the houses dingy and small," wrote Lorimer about the Qatari capital - now a city of wealth and ambition, but then, to his eyes, a semi-abandoned village.

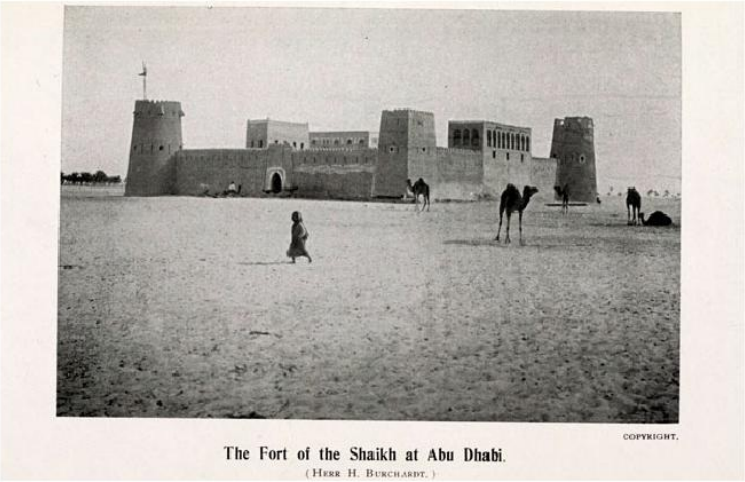


Dohah in Qatar.
(Herr H. Burchardt.)

"There are no trees. The people are unhealthy in appearance - a circumstance which is attributed to their assiduity in pearl diving, which places a severe strain on the human constitution."

Dubai, Lorimer reports, had a population of about 10,000 (today, more than two million). Steamers from India docked once a fortnight, but aside from pearls, the only local exports were shells and dried fish.

Meanwhile in Abu Dhabi Lorimer saw "no cultivation except a little of dates, [and] no trade worthy of mention outside the town. Camels abound."



The Fort of the Shaikh at Abu Dhabi.
(Herr H. Burchardt.)

Lorimer planned the gazetteer's second volume as a comprehensive survey of Gulf history. He was working on it, alongside his diplomatic duties in Bushire (now Bushehr in Iran), when he lost his life.

Round the Bend

A series of tales from the days when Britain ruled India and the Gulf, told with documents newly digitised by the British Library

- The singing sailor of Oman
- Monsieur Romieu - a 'man of talents'
- The pearl fishers of Arabia
- The diplomat who said 'No' to Saudi oil
- Love to Patrick
- The ultimate hardship posting

The Times of India reported that on Sunday 8 February 1914, while cleaning his pistol, Lorimer "pulled the trigger and discharged a last cartridge which had been overlooked in the magazine". He died from a single gunshot wound to the stomach and was buried next day with full honours. He was just 43. A letter in the following week's Spectator described him as "one of the keenest of intellects, with a mind like a Damascus blade".

Lorimer's historical volume, completed by a colleague, was published in five parts in 1915 - and, like its companion, marked "secret" for decades. It was only after declassification in 1955 that Lorimer could be credited for his work. His 5,000-page "handbook" has been central to the study of the Gulf ever since.

The British Library is now publishing the entire Gazetteer online. Earlier this year it invited the Lorimer family and BBC Scotland to observe the digitisation process.

Lorimer's greatest achievement was to gather a vast body of knowledge into one place. But it wasn't all facts and figures. Moments of drama emerge as in this episode off the coast of Abu Dhabi: "On the night of 31 August 1873, a slave swam off to the [British ship] May Frere from a fleet of 73 pearl boats in the vicinity. The slave received protection, with the result that all the pearl boats weighed [anchor], lest their slaves should desert and be freed."

Up until then, fugitive slaves seeking safety on board a British vessel might have been handed back to their owners. But after this incident it became Admiralty policy not to return escapees to slavery under any circumstances.

Dubai, Doha and Abu Dhabi

Lorimer then wryly records another bid for freedom.

"On 25 November 1899, on the occasion of a visit to Qatar, a slave belonging to a relative of the [ruling] sheikh waded off in the dark to the Residency launch and succeeded in getting on board. He was accordingly liberated."

The sheikh's response is unknown.

*British Library curator **Daniel Lowe** contributed original research for this article. Click here to read* his essay on Lorimer's legacy.

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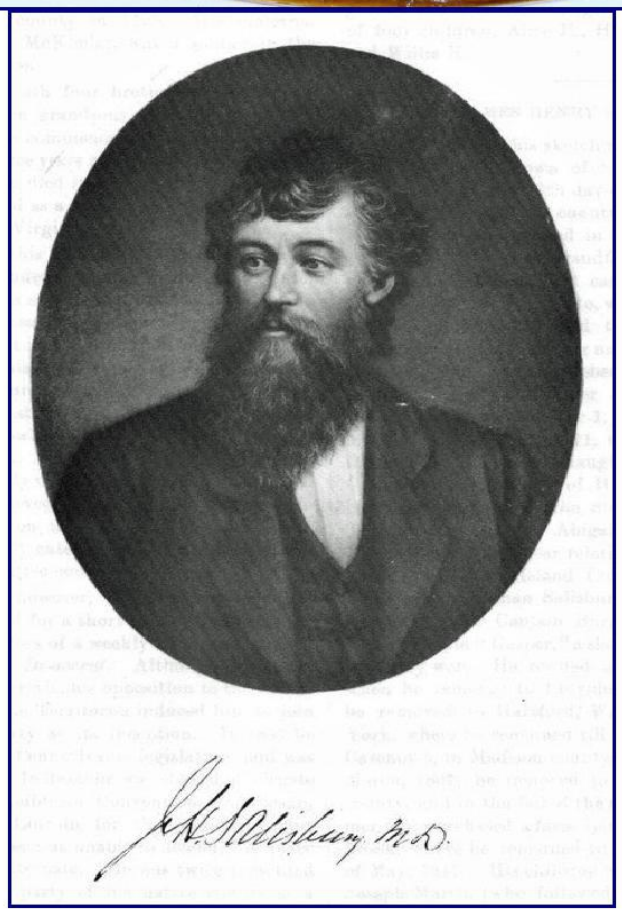

History's First Fad Diet —- The Dr. Salisbury's Healthy Steak

During the 1990's and early 2,000's, the Atkins Diet was all the rage, a diet which emphasized the consumption of meat and a limiting of carbohydrates. While such a diet may seem like a modern invention, in truth the low carb diet has its origins in the 19th century. One of the early supporters of a low carb diet was a physician and chemist named Dr. James Henry Salisbury. Dr. Salisbury's philosophy of healthy eating was that people should consume as much meat in their diet as possible,

not only limiting carbohydrates, but all fresh fruits and vegetables. According to Salisbury, digestion of fruits and vegetables produced toxic substances which could cause heart disease, cancer, tuberculosis, and mental illness. While low carb diets might make sense today in moderation, Dr. Salisbury's approach was extreme to say the least.

Dr. Salisbury first tested his theories during the American Civil War, where he served as an army physician. During the Civil War it was not uncommon for soldiers to become ill and drop dead, what with the quality of healthcare and field medicine at the time. In fact, during the Civil War, far more soldiers were killed by disease rather than combat. One pervasive problem among the Union Army was chronic diarrhea. Dr. Salisbury theorized that such problems were a result of army rations chalk with carbohydrates. To treat the problem, Dr. Salisbury created a special patty made from chopped up meat, which he called, "muscle pulp of beef". Dr. Salisbury recommended that Union soldiers eat nothing but "muscle pulp of beef", and indeed the diet did work. However, one would imagine the trials and tribulation of those poor Union soldiers as their diarrhea transformed into constipation. In addition, it would be fair to say that they suffered other ailments, such as scurvy and other diseases caused by vitamin deficiencies.

In 1888, Dr. Salisbury published a health book called *The Relation of Alimentation and Disease.* In the book, Salisbury extolled the virtues of a meat heavy diet, recommending that fruit and vegetable make up less than 1/3rd of the diet, while the rest should consist of his "muscle pulp of beef", mutton, and coffee. His diet became a hit when an Englishwoman named Elma Stuart took up the diet, publishing her result in a book where she praised Dr. Salisbury's ideas. To further popularize the diet, Stuart renamed the dish, "muscle pulp of beef" to the more appetizing sounding, "Salisbury Steak". With a new name and high praise, Dr. Salisbury's diet took the late 19th century by storm, becoming the first fad diet in history. For the next two decades, the Salisbury Diet was the most popular weight loss and health regimens for the wealthy and upper middle class.

Today Salisbury Steak is a common item among institutional cafeterias and TV dinners, although its original purpose has been mostly forgotten.

The French delicacy made of 25 layers of pig intestines

30November2014 bbc.com

Andouilles de Guemene served on table

Guemene-sur-Scorff in north-west France may not be well known internationally, but a popular French delicacy was born in the town. The andouille de Guemene is a pork sausage made from pigs' intestines and stomachs.

A local andouillerie, Rivalan Quidu, advertises its presence on the outskirts of Guemene-sur-Scorff in Brittany, France, with a sculpture in the corner of its vast car park.

You won't need to take a great leap of imagination to visualise what a representation, in fibreglass, of two giant andouilles might be mistaken for, but the locals take their home-grown delicacy very seriously indeed.

A steady stream of customers - from passing tourists to lorry drivers on their regular beat - pull in to buy a chunk.

The andouille de Guemene is a relatively new phenomenon - the recipe having been created only in 1930 by Joseph Quidu, the son of a local farmer - but Gallic gourmands with a fascination for all elements of the gastrointestinal tract of a pig have embraced it as a classic.

As I push open the shop door I'm enveloped by the aromas of fat and smoke. I suspect just breathing the air could send my cholesterol levels into double figures.

Rivalan-Quidu

The narrow shop is fitted out to resemble a Breton kitchen, complete with pine fixtures. Andouilles hang from every part of the ceiling like crinkly brown stalactites. At one end is a typically huge Breton fireplace - it too is festooned with andouilles, being smoked over a wood fire.

Andouilles served with pommes ecrases

The stones are caked in glistening, sooty fat. Behind the counter is Benoit, husband of Joseph's grand-daughter Francoise, who together with their children are carrying the tradition of the andouille

de Guemene into its third and fourth generations.

Out at the back, away from the public gaze - and possibly out of respect for the squeamish - is the kitchen where the andouilles are created in a modern style true to Joseph's original recipe.

Inspired, I like to imagine, by the act of pulling on more than one pair of socks to counter the cold and damp Breton winters, Joseph pulled one length of chaudin - or pig intestine - over another, and then another. Around 20 or 25 in all.

The salted intestines of three pigs, weighing in at 3kg, go into each andouille, which are then smoked over oak wood and dried, sometimes for months on end before being cooked slowly in stock. Cut through, the innards resemble pinky-grey tree rings carrying a distinctly smoky taste and aroma.

Andouilles de Guemene sliced down middle

The andouilles shrivel the longer they are dried

Benoit had never tasted andouille until he started courting Francoise. He cheerfully admits he at first thought it bizarre, but he saw the potential - especially when, back in the 90s, endorsement by France's outspoken celebrity chef and food campaigner Jean-Pierre Coffe saw demand skyrocket.

Joseph made about five andouilles a week, his son Laurent made about 200, and today Rivalan Quidu employs nine people turning out 1,000 a week.

The younger andouilles, dried for just two or three weeks, are cut up and sauteed in hot dishes. The sausages dried for three months are more shrivelled, more intensely flavoured and served in paper-thin slices as an aperitif, with a glass of chilled muscadet or local cider.

Andouilles de Guemene must never be confused with the ubiquitous, cheap and cheerful, andouillette. These are the plump, loose-stuffed sausages which when cut open spill out a grisly assortment of components like an organic Airfix kit.

The andouille de Guemene is a much more sophisticated speciality with a price tag to match. It retails at 39 euros ($50, £30) per kg. Benoit helps me do the maths, approximately £1 per inch (2.5cm).

At this point, lest I begin to sound like an infomercial, I must state: "Other andouilles de Guemene are available."

The fact is that anybody, anywhere can make andouille de Guemene. And it is happening, on

Andouilles de Guemene on sale at Rivalan-Quidu

a commercial scale, as far away as Poland.

Benoit is too much of a gentleman to suggest that the rival product is inferior, but says that the production process is turned on its head to save time and cut costs. In some places the chaudins are dipped in a bath of liquid flavouring to mimic the authentic smokiness.

Benoit is not unduly concerned. He is confident that by 2022 he will have doubled production to 2,000 andouilles a week, expanding his market across the Atlantic to the US state of Louisiana and Quebec in Canada.

"Et peut-etre," says Benoit, "Londres?" But then he smiles mischievously to show this is just a joke - a plaisanterie.

He suspects English taste buds will never be sophisticated enough to appreciate "la vraie andouille de Guemene". But his Gallic shrug says he doesn't see this as a serious setback to his ambitious plans.

Photographs courtesy of La Maison de l'andouille

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The Friendly Ghost Dog

In Perry County, on the Eastern edge of Kentucky, near the Virginia border, Lotts Creek flows through a small, quiet community. And on the banks of this creek can be seen one of Kentucky's friendliest ghosts, happily wagging his tail as he walks from home to home.

The ghost dog of Lotts Creek has been seen by people in the area for over a century. Described as a small, scruffy, black dog who is clearly visible but also physically intangible, no one seems to know whose dog he was originally, or he came to haunt the area, but the ghost dog seems to be a permanent member of the Lotts Creek community.

This is one ghost who is friendly and well-disposed towards people. He has never been known to bite anyone or to get angry. In fact, the phantom dog is downright playful. The dog has been known to run around people, dash in between there legs, jump through windows, hide under porches, and do pretty much everything else that a living dog who wants to play with people will do. He's also known to frequently be seen begging for food, although no one has yet worked exactly what to feed a spectral pooch.

In the past, people tried to test just how dead the dog was, and greeted him in the fine Kentucky tradition of dealing with the unknown by opening fire on it. But the bullets are said to have passed harmlessly through the dog like through empty air. The animal also doesn't seem to hold much of a grudge against those that shoot at him, as he'll be back at the same house begging for food the very next day.

The pot shots have become less frequent over the years, as people around Lotts Creek have come to accept the phantom dog as a harmless, even welcome, if still a bit unusual, member of the community.

So if you happen to be passing through Lotts Creek, keep an eye open for a friendly little dog running around, looking to play. You might try to stop and scratch I'm behind the ears. Your hand might go right through him, but he seems like the sort who would appreciate the effort.

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Cumberland Falls State Park, located near Corbin, Kentucky, is a staggeringly beautiful spot nestled in the mountains. The gorgeous waterfalls and walking trails have been attracting visitors for over a century, many coming to see the famous moonbow visible over the falls on nights of the full moon. Whether you're planning to stay at the exquisite DuPont Lodge, or rent one of the many cabins in the area, Cumberland Falls and Cumberland Lake can be the perfect spot for a small vacation or even a quiet honeymoon. But one Honeymoon at Cumberland Falls in the 1950s ended in tragedy, a tragedy that still haunts the park to this day.

The Ghost Bride of Cumberland Falls has been appearing in the park since the 1950s. The legend says that a young couple who had been married that very afternoon came to spend their honeymoon in one of the cabins near the falls. In the early evening, the tired but exited couple went for a walk, still wearing the clothes they had been wearing at the ceremony. The man took his camera along with him, prepared for the natural beauty of the falls and the glowing beauty of his new bride.

The young woman decided she wanted a picture of herself in her wedding dress with the falls in the background. Climbing up a nearby hill in the cool evening light, the woman playfully danced near the edge of the cliff, filled with joy at beginning her new life. But that life came to a sudden, unexpected end. Moving towards the edge of the cliff to pose, the young bride lost her footing and slipped off the cliff edge, hitting her head on a rock and drowning in the swiftly-moving waters beneath the falls.

The unfortunate young girl still seems to be waiting for the excitement of her wedding night. For ever since her death, people have reported seeing the ghostly figure of a woman in a white wedding dress near the falls.

The most common sightings of the Ghost Bride happen at the top of the cliff near where he fell. A road now goes along that cliff, with a sharp curve right near the fatal overlook. Many park visitors have reported seeing the figure of a woman in a wedding dress run in front of their car as they come around this curve. If anyone stops, the bride inevitably disappears without a trace.

The second, and more spectacular, manifestation of the Ghost Bride of Cumberland Falls happens on the night of the moonbow. A moonbow is a phenomenon produced by moonlight refracting off of water in the air, in the same way that sunlight produces a rainbow. Cumberland Falls is the only place in North America where a moonbow can predictably be seen. Tourists commonly gather on nights of the full moon to see this beautiful effect of the soft light. But sometimes, people gathered to see the moonbow will see more than they were expecting. It's said that some nights, when the moonbow is at its peak, at the base of the cliff where the young woman fell, a ghostly figure dressed in a white wedding gown can be seen rising up out of the waters.

The famous story of the Ghost Bride of Cumberland Falls attracts many visitors and curiosity seekers to the park. The story has left its impression on the park, so much that the cliff were the bride fell to her death is now known as Lover's Leap. If you go in search of an encounter with the phantom bride, even if you don't see her, you may well fall in love with the scenic beauty of one of Kentucky's natural wonders.

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The remarkable and tragic story of Floyd Collins comes from an earlier Kentucky and an earlier America. For two weeks in 1925, a small cave in Western Kentucky and the plight of Floyd Collins, the man trapped in that cave, were the focus of a nationwide media storm, leaving a legacy that extends beyond Floyd Collins' several graves.

William Floyd Collins was a Kentucky Native whose family owned and operated Crystal Cave, near the much larger Mammoth Cave, as a tourist attraction in the 1920s. Cave tours were great business for families and small towns in those days. As automobiles spread and every corner of America became connected with highways what would become an American tradition, the road trip, was born. Across the country, roadside tourist attractions sprung up hoping to pull families off the road with promises of novelty and wonder. Natural attractions like caves, gorges, or natural bridges were quickly commercialized, as small entrepreneurs turned these works of nature into acts of commerce by adding on guided tours, gift shops, and burger stands. It was the beginning of the golden age of highway travel in America.

Mammoth Cave, now a national park, was one of the biggest attractions in the entire region, fueling a whole surrounding local industry of gift shops and novelty hotels. Now known to be the longest cave system in the world, Mammoth Cave offered visitors boat tours on an underground river, breathtaking chambers, even the remains of what was left when part of the cave had briefly served as a tuberculosis hospital. For Mammoth Cave, it was great, and business was booming. For the Collins family, whose stunningly beautiful but more difficult to reach Crystal Cave, it presented a real problem.

Floyd Collins' solution was to find a cave with an entrance located somewhere on the road before the entrance to Mammoth Cave, or even better another entrance to the Mammoth Cave system, that would give Floyd first shot at their money. An experienced cave explorer, Floyd began scouting, carrying the offer to landowners where the caves were located of a deal to split profits from the eventual tourists. In early 1925, Collins thought he had found his cave, a small entrance to an underground passage which was located above where he knew the Mammoth Cave system ran.

On January 30, 1925, Floyd Collins set out to explore the cave, which would later come to be known as Sand Cave. But when he went, Collins broke the foremost rule of caving: he went alone. This is something that no one should ever do when entering any cave, but particularly an unexplored one with unknown dangers. Caves are dangerous places, and a solo caver in peril has no one to cry out to for help.

After several hours of hard work, Collins managed to squeeze himself through several narrow passages and come into a larger chamber. Excited, but running out of fuel for his oil lamp, Collins began hurrying back to the surface. On his way out, he became wedged in a narrow crawlway, and in his efforts to get out accidentally knocked over his lamp, extinguishing the flame. Groping in the dark, he dislodged a rock from the ceiling, which pinned his leg down.

Floyd Collins was trapped, only 150 feet from the entrance to the cave.

Floyd Collins remained alone and in the complete darkness throughout the night. The next day, when some friends realized he was missing, they went to the cave and began calling out for Floyd. They were relieved when they heard him calling back, but then terrified as they realized just how bad his situation was. There was no way to reach the rock that had pinned Floyd's leg down.

A frantic rescue effort began, as friends and family gathered. An electric light was led into the cave to provide light, and some caver friends of Collins' managed to work their way down into the passage to feed him.

Meanwhile, news of the rescue attempt reached William Burke "Skeets" Miller, a reporter at the Louisville *Courrier-Journal*, who began running stories about the rescue. These stories were picked up by the national news wires, and then the story landed on the new medium of radio. Floyd Collins immediately became a nationwide media sensation, with stations from all across the country sending reporters for live, on-the-spot coverage. The area around Sand Cave quickly developed into a carnival-like atmosphere. Booths sprang up selling souvenirs and moonshine. Extra train services were added from Louisville to the nearest station.

Below the surface, things weren't as happy. The rescue efforts had proved so far fruitless, and on February 4th the situation became critical when the passage that had been used to reach Collins collapsed. Time for Collins was now rapidly running out. Henry St. George Tucker Carmichael, a friend of Collins and a leader in the rescue effort, decided reaching Collins through the cave was now dangers and began digging a shaft down from the surface to reach Collins. But when the rescuers finally reached him on February 17, it was too late. Floyd Collins had died of hunger and exposure some days before.

The rescuers were unable to remove Collins' body, and his family determined that Sand Cave would be his grave. It would prove to be only his first, as the strange Odyssey of Floyd Collins body begun.

After the media storm had died down, Floyd's brother Homer grew increasingly dissatisfied with the idea of Sand Cave as his brother's final resting place. He and several companions reopened the shaft that had been used to reach Floyd. Digging a tunnel off the shaft, they were able to successfully remove Collins body after several weeks' work. Floyd Collins was then buried in his second grave, on the family land.

Floyd Collins would remain at rest there for two years, until his family sold their land and Crystal Cave to H.B. Thomas, a local dentist and cave operator. Thomas received the family's permission to exhume Floyd Collins' body and exhibit it in a glass-lidded coffin inside the cave. Soon, in his third grave, Floyd Collins was one of the area's biggest attractions. He had finally managed to transform Crystal Cave into a thriving tourist destination, although certainly not on the terms he anticipated.

Floyd was next disturbed in 1929, when his body was stolen from the cave. Although it was recovered, the injured leg had become separated from the body and was now missing. When

he was returned to the cave, Floyd was relocated again, to a more protected area and placed in a protected coffin with a wooden lid. He would remain there for another 60 years, serving as the subject for countless photographs snapped by tourists of friends and family point beside his coffin.

In 1961, the National Park Service purchased Crystal Cave and closed the cave to the public. In 1989, at the request of his family, Floyd Collins' body was moved to its fourth and hopefully final resting place in nearby Flint Ridge cemetery.

Although his body has now been removed from Crystal Cave, geologists and others visiting the cave say there is reason to believe Floyd Collins is still around.

In her book Scary Stories of Mammoth Cave, longtime cave tour guide Colleen O'Connor Olson recounts several stories of how Floyd Collins seems to have become friendly, even helpful, presence in the cave since his demise.

In 1954, multiple members of a expedition set out to map and explore the cave reported hearing a voice call out to them in the dark, including one instance where two men distinctly heard someone behind them yell "Wait!" as they were about to proceed down a passage. There were no other members of the expedition behind them.

In another incident, a student on a training expedition in the cave tripped and began to fall into a deep rock canyon in the cave. Struggling to regain her balance at the top of this potentially lethal fall, she was grateful when she felt a strong hand grab her right arm from behind. The hand pulled her back and steadied her,but when she turned to thank her rescuer there was no one there.

In one of the strangest incidents, in 1961 two researchers in the cave heard the sound of ringing coming from the Grand Canyon, the section of the cave that at that time still held the coffin of Floyd Collins. The source of the sound was the old telephone that connected the cave to the ticket office when it had been a tourist attraction. Rushing down the path, one of the researchers picked up the phone and heard a muted, shuffling sound coming from the other end. He spoke into the phone, asking if someone was trying to call Crystal Cave. He heard an astonished gasp and the line went dead. A few hours later, the men emerged to the surface and traced the path of the telephone lines. Near the ticket office, the line had been cut some time ago, and was there dangling in the empty air.

These and other incidents have led researchers and park officials working in the cave over the years to quietly acknowledge the presence of Floyd in the cave, even if only half-beleiving. But whoever comes in contact with this piece of Kentucky history can't help but be impressed with remarkable bravery of Floyd Collins and of his strange and fascinating afterlife.

In one final irony of Floyd Collins story, his search for a more important cave would have been successful if he had stayed in his own back yard. In 1954, it was discovered that Crystal Cave was connected to and part of the Mammoth Cave system.

Mitchell Hill Road lies on the southern end of Louisville. It winds from near Fairdale Elementary School on Mt. Holy Road, down through the Jefferson Memorial Forest to where it joins Knob Hill Road. Mitchell Hill Road is a narrow country road, with thick trees and undergrowth coming right to the edges of the road. As you go South along the road, there's a long, slow incline that picks up the pace and turns into a fast, steep drop along a series of hairpin curves along a steep, dangerous cliff just before it meets Knob Hill. It's an isolated road, and the long sloped straightaway gives a driver a chance to build up a good head of speed just before hitting the wild curves. For years, it was a local racing spot, which has earned this stretch of road the nickname Hotrod Haven

Driving down Hotrod Haven even in the best conditions can be a harrowing experience. The road runs right into a path carved by the Ohio River over millions of years. The slow, steady descent and beautiful view makes it easy for a driver to underestimate just how much speed he's put on, and then when the shock of the sudden steep drop and sharp curves comes near the end of the road, it's easy to lose control. Even to this day, every few years the road claims another life in a fatal accident. Racing down Hotrod Haven is to deliberately invite death into your car.

On a quiet autumn evening in 1946, death did come for a young couple driving down Mitchell Hill road. A young man and his sweetheart were on their way to a dance. They were happy and in love, enjoying the cool evening air, with eyes only for each other. That could have been why, when they came down towards those last hairpin curves at the end of the road, the young man lost control of the car, wildly tumbling off the side of the road. Both of the unfortunate young lovers were killed instantly.

The young were buried together in the shared grave, under one tombstone, in a small cemetery off Mitchell Hill Road not far from where they met their doom. But some people say that the young woman's spirit can still be seen along that deadly, winding road.

Ever since that tragic night all those years ago, travelers have been reporting seeing the pale figure of a young girl dressed in a formal gown, wandering beside the road between the cemetery and the curve where the car went off the road. Those who have seen her say she seems to be looking for something, or someone. Perhaps the accident happened so suddenly that the poor girl never came to realize that her life was over. She may be wondering up and dow the road eternally, wondering what happened and where her sweetheart has gone. Anyone who has tried to stop and help her says the figure vanishes before their eyes.

So if you find yourself driving down through Hotrod Haven one lonely evening, drive carefully, and keep your eyes open for a lonely figure who lost her life on that deadly road so many years ago.

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In 1871 a grisly and grotesque murder was committed in Western Kentucky, along the Metcalfe and Barren County line, near Randolph. The body of Lucy Perkins was discovered on the evening of August 25 in a wooded spot not too far from her home. She had gone out earlier in the day to do a little shopping. When she hadn't returned after several hours, her family set out to look for her, and soon discovered a horrifying sight.

Lucy Perkins had been violently murdered. Her head was almost completely severed from her body, only hanging on by a few tendons and a bit of flesh. A deep gash had been made in her body from neck to navel. It was a brutal, violent, and particularly sadistic crime.

Suspicion immediately fell upon her son-in-law, John Neville. In a complicated caucus of family politics, Neville had been at one time in love with and courting Lucy Perkins, back when she was Lucy Franklin. She had rejected his pleas for marriage, and so in a fit of pique he married his friend Bill Perkins' much younger daughter, though he card little for her. Shortly after the marriage, Perkins' wife died and he soon began courting Lucy Franklin. Neville was soon in the agonizing position of being trapped in an unhappy marriage, with the woman he still passionately loved as his mother-in-law. Neville had made no secret of his resentment at Bill and Lucy Perkins' happiness.

These were lawless days in Kentucky. The chaos that followed the Civil War had plunged large portions of the state into mob rule, where violence and lynching were the best the state had to offer in terms of justice. Neville was arrested and taken to jail in Edmonton, but the next day a mob rode up and demanded he be given over to their custody. They rode John Neville back to where Lucy Perkins' body was found and hanged him on a dogwood tree.

Ever since then, it's said that when travelers pass by the site of where the murder and the lynching took place, a ball of pale fire will spring up from the ground, and then disappear when the traveller has passed. Many people have seen this strange and uncanny sight. Is this the ghost of John Neville calling out from the grave?

Neville never confessed to Lucy Perkins' murder, and there was never a chance for any trial at which evidence for or against his guilt could be presented. When it comes to fairly dispensing justice, lynch mobs aren't always right. Did the citizens of Barren county that night hang an innocent man? The particularly brutal nature of the crime and the way the the unfortunate Lucy Perkins' body was mutilated would probably have modern police investigators looking for an experienced, dedicated sadistic killer. But with over a century having passes, we will never know what really happened to Lucy Perkins, and if John Neville really was the murderer. Unless someone can finally understand the ball of fire that appears beside the spot of the double murder is trying to tell us.

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My ladye hath a black blood-hound

That runneth on before.

My ladye's coach hath nodding plumes,

The driver hath no head;

My ladye is an ashen white,

As one that long is dead.

"Now pray step in," my ladye saith,

"Now pray step in and ride."

I thank thee, I had rather walk

Than gather by thy side.

The wheels go round without a sound

Or tramp or turn of wheels;

As cloud at night, in pale moonlight,

Along the carriage steals.

I'd rather walk a hundred miles

And run by night and day

Than have the carriage halt for me

And hear the ladye say:

"Now pray step in, and make no din,

Step in with me and ride;

There's room I trow, by me for you,

And all the world beside.""

I suppose it's about time I included a story that involves wicked women and headless horses

who pull a carriage made of human bones. The story of Lady Howard is probably one of the more noted of Dartmoor ghost stories that has been told around the peat fires of a dark night. So, let's begin way back in the 1600s where we can find John Fitz who at the age of 21 inherited a vast fortune. As is always the case, easy come - easy go and that was exactly what happened to his wealth, it went. Along the way John Fitz turned into a n'er do well and as fast as he lost his money he found a growing list of enemies. It was about this time when John Fitz had his daughter, Mary whose childhood was spent at the family pile of Fitzford House near Tavistock. When Mary was nine years old her father who by now was totally insane committed suicide. This left Mary with the family fortune which at the time attracted the attention of many greedy eyes. King James I finally intervened and sold the young girl to the Earl of Northumberland who then married her off to his brother, Sir Alan Percy. This then meant that the Fitzs' fortune moved over to Percy and the Earl, nice work if you can get it. Unfortunately, Sir Percy never lived long enough to enjoy his windfall as whilst on a hunting trip he caught a fever and died.

This 'tragedy' then left Mary free to find her own true love who came along in the guise of one Thomas Darcy. The couple stole off into the night and eloped in order that they could get married much to the annoyance of the Percy family. Sadly, this second marriage was doomed to failure as after a few months Thomas Darcy also died. Once again the rich widow became the target for fortune hunters and once again she chanced her arm and married again. This time she had managed to secure her wealth in such a way as no man could get to it. The third husband apparently was none too happy with this and the marriage was one long constant argument about the fortune. However, all was not lost as the third husband followed the celestial route of his predecessors and died of causes unknown. For the forth time Mary found herself a widow but also the subject of many scurrilous accusations concerning the deaths of her previous husbands. After all, one was a tragedy, two was a sad coincidence but three got tongues a waggin' and fingers a pointin'. But Mary was not to be deterred and eventually found herself a forth husband. This marriage must have been a little more harmonious as she gave birth to a boy which was christened George. Not long after his birth husband number four died, oops there goes another one.

It was after the latest tragedy that Mary decided to return to the now derelict family pile of Fitz House where with her son she planned to live out her days. Unfortunately her day number a lot more than her son's because it wasn't very long before he too died leaving Mary home alone. The story goes that the death of her son left Mary heartbroken, so much so that a few weeks after her son's death she joined him along with her four husbands in eternity.

So, you can imagine the stories, a woman whose father was a hated madman and who had seen off four husbands and one son. It did not take long before people began seeing her ghost. Legend has it that some divine entity sentenced her to spend eternity doing penance for her evil deeds. She was given the task of travelling each night from Fitz House to Okehampton Castle in the company of a huge black dog with blood red eyes and savage fangs. The nightly 30 mile round trip is taken in a carriage made from the bones of her four dead husbands and is driven by a headless driver. On reaching the castle the black dog plucks a single blade of grass from the castle mound. Both dog and blade are returned to the carriage of bones after which it rattles back to Tavistock. Once the grisly coach has returned

to Fitz House the blade of grass in carefully laid on a flat slab of granite. Only after all the grass has been removed from the castle mound at Okehampton will Mary be allowed to rest in peace which judging by the lush covering will be a long time away. If the phantom coach should stop outside any house then an occupant was sure to die as would anyone for who the coach stopped on the road.

Those that have witnessed the ghostly journey say that the first thing you notice is the rattling of the coach of bones as it thunders along the road. As it approaches the night air chills and the sound of thundering hooves grows louder and louder. Suddenly a huge black dog with crimson eyes hurtles down the road, although some folks say it has but one eye in the centre of its forehead. The dog is closely followed by the coach of bones, on each of the four corners is a skull belonging to each of the four husbands. It's headless driver relentlessly lashes the four stallions with a long bloodstained whip, again reports differ as some suggest that along with the driver the horses are headless as well. As the coach passes the ghostly white figure of a lady can be seen sitting in the back. If you're really lucky her head will turn revealing two eyeless sockets sunk deep into a pallid, grimacing face. After the carriage has sped by the stench of rotting flesh is left wafting heavily on the night air. For those daft enough to continue their journey there is a treat in store by way of seeing the coach on its return journey.

Having maligned poor Mary it might now be as well to put the record straight. Mary was born on the 1st of August 1596 and was baptised at Whitchurch. True, her father, Sir John Fitz was a nasty piece of work and was guilty of the murder of two men. It is a fact that because of his behaviour the family were detested in the Tavistock are and he did commit suicide by stabbing himself. He was buried at Twickenham on the 10th of August 1605. Mary married her third husband, Sir John Howard in 1612 and he died on the 22nd of September 1622. She remarried in about 1628, this time to Sir Richard Grenville who treated her atrociously, the outcome of which was a divorce and not his death in 1633. Once the divorce had been processed she reverted to her previous name of Howard and was known as Lady Mary Howard.

At no time in her life had she been remotely considered as an evil woman, in fact quite the opposite as Mary was always held in high regard. She actually gave birth to several children and shed her mortal coil on October the 17th 1671 at the grand old age of 75. There is even a walk around Okehampton Castle which is known as Lady Howard's Walk so the tale must be true.

For an excellent account of Lady Howard see -'The Devil Comes to Dartmoor'.

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The most spectacular phantom in Devon is to be found in Okehampton. This is the ghost of the Wicked Lady Howard accompanied by her equally spectral entourage.

According to local legend, the Wicked Lady Howard was the evil daughter of an evil father. She married four times, each husband being murdered by her after the briefest of marriages. To atone for these crimes, the spirit of the guilty woman is doomed, until a certain task of completed, to sally forth from Okehampton Castle in her dreaded coach of bones. The coach, it is said, is made up of the bones of her victims with the supporting post at each corner topped by a grinning skull. In front of the coach runs a huge black hound which bays and howls in tones which alternate between mortal anguish and evil aggression. The coachman has no head and is reckoned to be the servant whose death caused that of the father of the wicked lady.

In this spectacular phantom coach the shade of the Wicked Lady Howard drives from Okehampton Castle to Fitzford House, near Tavistock. In the course of this journey she, or the dog, must pick one blade of grass from the roadside. Only when the verges of the road have been entirely stripped of grass will the penance of the murderess be completed and the coach of bones cease terrorising the good folk of Devon.

As if the coach of bones were not a frightening enough apparition as it was, the Wicked Lady Howard also had the task of singling out those she felt sufficiently deep in sin to act as her servants through the time of her penance. If she encountered such folk, she would halt her coach and open the door for them to join her.

An old song used to be sung in Okehampton to commemorate their most famous spectral resident.

My lady's coach hath nodding plumes
The driver hath no head
My lady is an ashen white
Like one that is long dead
Now pray step in, my lady saith,

Now pray step in and ride

I'd rather walk a hundred miles
And run by night and day
Than have that carriage halt for me
And hear my lady say

Now pray step in and make no din,

Step in with me and ride.

There’s room, I trow, by me for you
And all the world beside.

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Richmond's Eastern Kentucky University can easily lay claim to being the most haunted campus in the entire Bluegrass State. The halls and dorms of EKU host some of the most famous, and most unusual, ghosts in all of Kentucky.

The naked ghost of the Moore Building is probably where to begin with most unusual. This building, which hosts the classes and faculty of EKU's Science department, is reportedly haunted by the ghost of a young woman who appears to anyone lucky enough to see her stark naked. Descriptions of her build and appearance vary, but the nudity remains consistent. Reports of unclothed ghosts are relatively rare, although this doesn't necessarily stand to reason. As Ambrose Bierce pointed out nearly two centuries ago, if we believe that ghosts are the immortal souls of human beings, believing that the inanimate fabrics they wear also possess some immortal substance does stretch the point a bit. But if this thing from beyond nature is set on going about as nature intended, we have no objections.

In close competition with the naked ghost is the spectral inhabitant of the men's restroom on the fourth floor of the Bert Combs building. It's said that men who are in the restroom, apparently alone, feel a strange sensation of being watched. There have also been reports of an uncomfortable sensation of presence, as if someone is standing very close behind them, an experience which could definitely make a trip to the restroom a little nerve-wracking.

But the most famous ghost in all of Eastern Kentucky University's haunted menagerie is undoubtedly The Blue Lady. This ghost has been appearing since the 1950s, and is said to be the spirit of a young acting student.The young lady was said to have climbed up into the clock tower above The Pearl Buchanan Theater every night to memorize her lines in solitude. One night, falling into depression, perhaps over a lost role or an unrequited love, the young lady took her own life, and friends found her hanging from the clock tower rafters the next day.

Ever since that night, a mysterious presence seems to haunt the Pearl Buchanan Theater. Students working late at night in the theater often report a feeling of being watched. A unexplained cloud of blue mist is sometimes seen to flat around the theater. The shadowy figure of a young woman is sometimes seen walking around the balcony railing.

But perhaps the most unsettling manifestation of the Blue Lady is the singing. Many people have reported hearing a strange, haunting voice singing songs from the 30s and 40s coming from within the theater building. Those who have tried to track down the voice say the source is always impossible to determine, that it seems to move from place to place within the building. It's also said that the voice sounds somehow "distant", and tinged with a deep sadness.

The multiple ghosts of EKU all seem intent on staying around, and have become a part of the campus history and tradition. Students feel affection towards these ghosts, and feel privileged to have a genuine encounter with one of them, with the possible exception of whatever it is in

the men's restroom.

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Local legend says 13 witches are buried beneath Johnston Drive, a stretch of road that runs from Watchung to Scotch Plains.

By Emily Everson (Open Post) October 31, 2011 at 12:45am

Young drivers in Union County know the ultimate moonlight rush can be found on Johnston Drive — not for the scenic overlook it provides but, perhaps, for what is buried beneath it.

This mountain road that runs from Watchung to Scotch Plains is, as local legend has it, the final resting place for 13 sisters who were found to be killing children in an area that is now known as the historic " Deserted Village." That village, also known as Feltville, consisted of about 175 residents in 1850 that was abandoned after property owner David Felt sold it and future businessmen failed to make it a successful site. Some of the original structures still stand deserted in that spot.

The legend continues that these “witches” who killed children in the village were tried and hanged and then buried under what is now Johnston Drive – their bodies left as bumps in the road. The road has since been paved multiple times and with every paving application, the bumps mysteriously re-appear. Now there are some that seem to present logical explanations for why the bumps were there in the first place, but no one can seem to debunk the mystery of why the bumps pop back up.

Michelle DeRocco, the City Clerk in Watchung noted that a project to repave Johnston Drive was recently completed in June. When asked if she thinks the bumps will re-appear once again, DeRocco did not discount the legend and instead simply stated, “only time will tell.”

Mayor Gerald Mobus of Watchung said that although his family has lived in Watchung since the 1800s, he only heard of the legend about 10 years ago. Offering his own explanation for the bumps, Mobus guffawed at the notion of 13 murderous sisters, light-heartedly poking fun at those who fall for the story.

“Back in the 1800s there used to be a school house on the top of the hill," Mobus said. "Those bumps were placed in the road so that the horses and buggies wouldn’t slide back down the hill."

But wait, hold on a second; multiples sources including the 13th issue of Weird NJ state that in 1993, the road was paved again and the bumps arose two days later. Patch asked the mayor about this claim.

“That project in 1993 was the first phase of the paving that was just completed in June. In 1993, the paving ended at Upper Drive; the workers didn’t even touch the 13 bumps,” Mobus said.

James Sully Sullivan, a lifelong resident of Berkeley Heights states that “the 13 bumps have re-appeared after paving at least twice since 1978.”

In the process of investigating this local horror story, Patch tracked down Sullivan after discovering a YouTube video he had posted about his own midnight ride. He is a firm believer in “whatever makes the bumps pop back up."

“The story goes that in the days of Feltvile [now known as the Deserted Village] there was a long carriage path from Seeley’s Pond to a hotel on the top of the mountain. Thirteen sisters lived on Johnston Drive. There were families all along that trail. Supposedly these sisters went over to Feltville to kidnap children and kill them. The citizens of Feltvile hunted the sisters down, killed them and buried them along the side of the mountain. Before they were executed, the witches vowed to come back. This road has been repaved and repaved over and over again and every time the bumps come back.”

Sullivan went on to elaborate the connection between the Deserted Village and the 13 bumps.

“You can go back and research and ask, 'why was the village deserted?' Something as traumatic as having a bunch of children stolen from your town and brutally murdered would make anyone want to get the hell out of there,” Sullivan explained.

The legend continues that if you drive over the bumps and count them, then say "thirteen witches" and turn around, you can see the witches following behind your car.

Sullivan's first time driving over the bumps was as a teenager.

“I was 14 years old and sitting in the back seat of my friend’s older brother’s car who we were all afraid of," Sullivan said. "It was like getting to the top of a roller coaster; Johnston Drive is a long stretch of road giving first-timers a lot of time to build up anticipation. I didn’t see any witches that night, but the thirteen individual bumps were definitely there.”

According to Sullivan's YouTube page, he's tried to see those witches numerous times but, so far, the bumps are all that appear.

When confronted with the latest information on the paving of Johnston Drive, Sullivan reaffirmed his belief stating that “the bumps will rise again.”

*Editor's Note: This is the second in a series of stories on the ghosts of Union County. So, what do you think? Ever felt the presence of witches on that long stretch of Johnston Drive?

For our first ghost story,

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One of the newer members of Kentucky's menagerie of spirits is a ghost that's seen in the Red River Gorge near Slade, Kentucky. It's said that that a climber met his death while scaling a risky rock face in the area, and now the glowing light of his spirit can be seen where he died.

The Nada Tunnel, on Kentucky Route 77, also known as Nada Tunnel Road, is a genuinely stunning piece of engineering. Originally completed in the early 20th Century as passage for the narrow gauge railroad used by loggers working in the area, the tunnel now carries road traffic through the Red River Gorge. The tunnel seems designed to intimidate drivers. A tiny hole with layers and layers of limestone outcroppings sitting above it, the tunnel gives the illusion of being in danger of being crushed at any moment. The two-lane road also narrows to a single lane going through the very narrow tunnel, so drivers have to be constantly alert and hope that anyone coming through the tunnel on the other side got the message to yield.

It was the massive outcroppings above the tunnel that proved irresistible to a young daredevil rock climber from Ohio not too long ago. While there are plenty of climbing areas in the Red River Gorge, breaking ground on this new rock face with the traffic moving past below just seemed too exciting to pass up. This was just the first of a series of mistakes that led to his death.

The young man was climbing alone. He was not wearing any distinctive or brightly colored clothing. He was in an area that he wasn't familiar with. It was also already late in the afternoon when he set out on his climb. In these deep gorges, sunset comes early and nearly instantly when the sun sinks below the high cliff walls.

But the climber would not be deterred. He set out from the road beside the tunnel entrance, making his way up and over the ancient rocks. Moving from foothold to foothold, hand to handhold, he inched his way along the wall until he found himself about thirty feet directly above the entrance to the tunnel. That's when he realized just how much trouble he was in.

Having been so focussed on making his way up the rock face, the man had failed to notice how dark it had gotten. And in the cooling evening, the moisture in the air was beginning to cool and settle on the rocks — the wall was getting slippery.

Perhaps the young man panicked. Perhaps he missed his handhold. Perhaps he had just gravely overestimated his own abilities. Whatever the reason, the young man slipped and fell down towards the road below. He might have survived with just a few badly broke bones, except that has fall took him directly into the path of an oncoming truck as it emerged from the tunnel below. The driver had no time to react.

The truck driver pulled off to the side of the road and rushed back to see what he had hit. When the driver reached his side, it took the unfortunate climber eleven seconds to die.

Now, sometimes in the evenings, at the entrance to Nada Tunnel, a strange, bright green glow is seen. The light seems to be about the size and shape of a man. It rises up from the ground and glows for eleven seconds before disappearing.

Perhaps it's the ghost of the young man, returning to warn others not to be so foolhardy. Or perhaps he's still vainly reaching up from beyond the grave and trying to get back on the rock face. Whatever it is, if anything else this strange glow should be a reminder to drive carefully when going through the tunnel and through the gorge.

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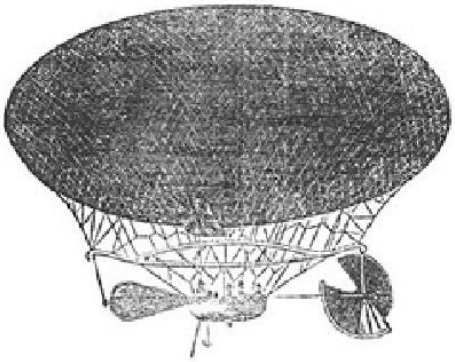
Details

Published: Monday, 08 September 2014 14:21

Written by G. S. Smith



In April of 1844, Edgar Allan Poe walked into the offices of the New York Sun newspaper carrying a 5,000 word document that chronicled one of the most sensational pieces of news in recorded human history; That Thomas Monck Mason, the famed aeronaut and flutist, William Samuel Henson, the inventor of the first patented steam powered airship, the famed novelist Harrison Ainsworth and five others had flown a balloon from England to the United States, crossing the Atlantic Ocean, approximately 3,900 miles, in a mere 75 hours landing on Sullivan's Island, South Carolina.

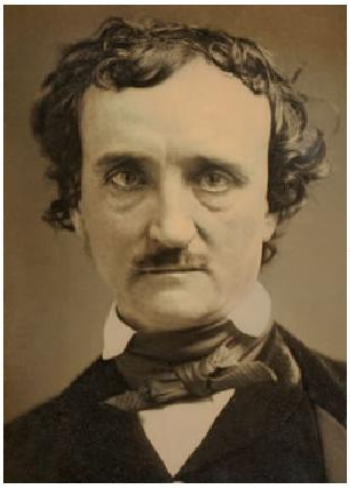
The only real problem with the amazing news article, which gave detailed accounts of the vessel used to make the historic voyage, descriptions of the balloon's design and its propulsion system, steering mechanisms and journal notes by the aeronauts, was that all of it was a fabrication perpetrated by the enigmatic Edgar Allan Poe.

The account of the epic journey, which had been provided by Poe, was printed in the New York Sun on April 13, 1844. 170 years later the incident is known as The Great Balloon Hoax!

ASTOUNDING NEWS BY EXPRESS, VIA NORFOLK!

- The Atlantic Crossed in Three Days!
- Signal Triumph of Mr. Monck Mason's Flying Machine!
- Arrival at Sullivan's Island, near Charlestown, S. C., of Mr. Mason, Mr. Robert Holland, Mr. Henson, Mr. Harrison Ainsworth, and four others, in the Steering Balloon, Victoria, after a Passage of Seventy-five Hours from Land to Land!
- Full Particulars of the Voyage!

THE GREAT problem is at length solved! The air, as well as the earth and the ocean, has been subdued by science, and will become a common and convenient highway for mankind. The Atlantic has been actually crossed in a Balloon! and this too without difficulty-without any great apparent danger-with thorough control of the machine-and in the inconceivably brief period of seventy-five hours from shore to shore! By the energy of an agent at Charleston, S. C., we are enabled to be the first to furnish the public with a detailed account of this most extraordinary voyage, which was performed between Saturday, the 6th instant, at 11 A.M. and 2 P.M., on Tuesday, the 9th instant, by Sir Everard Bringhurst; Mr. Osborne, a nephew of



Lord Bentinck's; Mr. Monck Mason and Mr. Robert Holland, the well-known aeronauts; Mr. Harrison Ainsworth, author of "Jack Sheppard," etc.; and Mr. Henson the projector of the late unsuccessful flying machine-with two seamen from Woolwich-in all, eight persons. The particulars furnished below may be relied on as authentic and accurate in every respect, as, with a slight exception, they are copied verbatim from the joint diaries of Mr. Monck Mason and Mr. Harrison Ainsworth, to whose politeness our agent is also indebted for much verbal information respecting the balloon itself, its construction, and other matters of interest. The only alteration in the MS. received, has been made for the purpose of throwing the hurried account of our agent, Mr. Forsyth, into a connected and intelligible form.

THE BALLOON

Two very decided failures, of late,-those of Mr. Henson and Sir George Cayley,-had much weakened the public interest in the subject of aerial navigation. Mr. Henson's scheme (which at first was considered very feasible even by men of science) was founded upon the principle of an inclined plane, started from an eminence by an extrinsic force, applied and continued by the revolution of impinging vanes, in form and number resembling the vanes of a windmill. But, in all the experiments made with models at the Adelaide Gallery, it was found that the operation of these fins not only did not propel the machine, but actually impeded its flight. The only propelling force it ever exhibited, was the mere impetus acquired from the descent of the inclined plane, and this impetus carried the machine farther when the vanes were at rest, than when they were in motion-a fact which sufficiently demonstrates their inutility, and in the absence of the propelling, which was also the sustaining power, the whole fabric would necessarily descend. This consideration led Sir George Cayley to think only of adapting a propeller to some machine having of itself an independent power of support-in a word, to a balloon; the idea, however, being novel, or original, with Sir George, only so far as regards the mode of its application to practice. He exhibited a model of his invention at the Polytechnic Institution. The propelling principle, or power, was here, also, applied to interrupted surfaces, or vanes, put in revolution. These vanes were four in number, but were found entirely ineffectual in moving the balloon, or in aiding its ascending power. The whole project was thus a complete failure.

It was at this juncture that Mr. Monck Mason (whose voyage from Dover to Weilburg in the balloon Nassau occasioned so much excitement in 1837) conceived the idea of employing the principle of the Archimedean screw for the purpose of propulsion through the air- rightly attributing the failure of Mr. Henson's scheme, and of Sir George Cayley's to the interruption of surface in the independent vanes. He made the first public experiment at Willis's Rooms, but afterward removed his model to the Adelaide Gallery.

Like Sir George Cayley's balloon, his own was an ellipsoid. Its length was 13 feet 6 inches-height, 6 feet 8 inches. It contained about 320 cubic feet of gas, which, if pure hydrogen, would support 21 pounds upon its first inflation, before the gas has time to deteriorate or

escape. The weight of the whole machine and apparatus was 17 pounds-leaving about 4 pounds to spare. Beneath the centre of the balloon, was a frame of light wood, about 9 feet long, and rigged on to the balloon itself with a net-work in the customary manner. From this framework was suspended a wicker basket or car.

The screw consists of an axis of hollow brass tube, 18 inches in length, through which, upon a semi-spiral inclined at 15 degrees, pass a series of steel-wire radii, 2 feet long, and thus projecting a foot on either side. These radii are connected at the outer extremities by 2 bands of flattened wire; the whole in this manner forming the framework of the screw, which is completed by a covering of oiled silk cut into gores, and tightened so as to present a tolerably uniform surface. At each end of its axis this screw is supported by pillars of hollow brass tube descending from the hoop. In the lower ends of these tubes are holes in which the pivots of the axis revolve. From the end of the axis which is next the car, proceeds a shaft of steel, connecting the screw with the pinion of a piece of spring machinery fixed in the car. By the operation of this spring, the screw is made to revolve with great rapidity, communicating a progressive motion to the whole. By means of the rudder, the machine was readily turned in any direction. The spring was of great power, compared with its dimensions, being capable of raising 45 pounds upon a barrel of 4 inches diameter, after the first turn, and gradually increasing as it was wound up. It weighed, altogether, eight pounds six ounces. The rudder was a light frame of cane covered with silk, shaped somewhat like a battledoor, and was about 3 feet long, and at the widest, one foot. Its weight was about 2 ounces. It could be turned flat, and directed upward or downward, as well as to the right or left-, and thus enabled the aeronaut to transfer the resistance of the air which in an inclined position it must generate in its passage, to any side upon which he might desire to act; thus determining the balloon in the opposite direction.

This model (which, through want of time, we have necessarily described in an imperfect manner) was put in action at the Adelaide Gallery, where it accomplished a velocity of 5 miles per hour; although, strange to say, it excited very little interest in comparison with the previous complex machine of Mr. Henson-so resolute is the world to despise anything which carries with it an air of simplicity. To accomplish the great desideratum of aerial navigation, it was very generally supposed that some exceedingly complicated application must be made of some unusually profound principle in dynamics.

So well satisfied, however, was Mr. Mason of the ultimate success of his invention, that he determined to construct immediately, if possible, a balloon of sufficient capacity to test the question by a voyage of some extent; the original design being to cross the British Channel, as before, in the Nassau balloon. To carry out his views, he solicited and obtained the patronage of Sir Everard Bringhurst and Mr. Osborne, two gentlemen well known for scientific acquirement, and especially for the interest they have exhibited in the progress of aerostation. The project, at the desire of Mr. Osborne, was kept a profound secret from the public-the only persons entrusted with the design being those actually engaged in the construction of the machine, which was built (under the superintendence of Mr. Mason, Mr. Holland, Sir Everard Bringhurst, and Mr. Osborne) at the seat of the latter gentleman near Penstruthal, in Wales. Mr. Henson, accompanied by his friend Mr. Ainsworth, was admitted to a private view of the balloon, on Saturday last; when the two gentlemen made final

arrangements to be included in the adventure. We are not informed for what reason the two seamen were also included in the party-but in the course of a day or two, we shall put our readers in possession of the minutest particulars respecting this extraordinary voyage.

The balloon is composed of silk, varnished with the liquid gum caoutchouc. It is of vast dimensions, containing more than 40,000 cubic feet of gas; but as coal gas was employed in place of the more expensive and inconvenient hydrogen, the supporting power of the machine, when fully inflated, and immediately after inflation, is not more than about 2500 pounds. The coal gas is not only much less costly, but is easily procured and managed.

For its introduction into common use for purposes of aerostation, we are indebted to Mr. Charles Green. Up to his discovery, the process of inflation was not only exceedingly expensive, but uncertain. Two and even three days have frequently been wasted in futile attempts to procure a sufficiency of hydrogen to fill a balloon, from which it had great tendency to escape, owing to its extreme subtlety, and its affinity for the surrounding atmosphere. In a balloon sufficiently perfect to retain its contents of coal gas unaltered, in quantity or amount, for six months, an equal quantity of hydrogen could not be maintained in equal purity for six weeks.

The supporting power being estimated at 2500 pounds, and the united weights of the party amounting only to about 1200, there was left a surplus of 1300, of which again 1200 was exhausted by ballast, arranged in bags of different sizes, with their respective weights marked upon them-by cordage, barometers, telescopes, barrels containing provision for a fortnight, water-casks, cloaks, carpet-bags, and various other indispensable matters, including a coffee-warmer, contrived for warming coffee by means of slack-lime, so as to dispense altogether with fire, if it should be judged prudent to do so. All these articles, with the exception of the ballast, and a few trifles, were suspended from the hoop overhead. The car is much smaller and lighter, in proportion, than the one appended to the model. It is formed of a light wicker, and is wonderfully strong for so frail looking a machine. Its rim is about 4 feet deep. The rudder is also very much larger, in proportion, than that of the model; and the screw is considerably smaller. The balloon is furnished besides with a grapnel, and a guide-rope, which latter is of the most indispensable importance. A few words, in explanation, will here be necessary for such of our readers as are not conversant with the details of aerostation.

As soon as the balloon quits the earth, it is subjected to the influence of many circumstances tending to create a difference in its weight; augmenting or diminishing its ascending power. For example, there may be a deposition of dew upon the silk, to the extent, even, of several hundred pounds; ballast has then to be thrown out, or the machine may descend. This ballast being discarded, and a clear sunshine evaporating the dew, and at the same time expanding the gas in the silk, the whole will again rapidly ascend. To check this ascent, the only recourse is (or rather was, until Mr. Green's invention of the guide-rope) the permission of the escape of gas from the valve; but, in the loss of gas, is a proportionate general loss of ascending power; so that, in a comparatively brief period, the best-constructed balloon must necessarily exhaust all its resources, and come to the earth. This was the great obstacle to voyages of length.

The guide-rope remedies the difficulty in the simplest manner conceivable. It is merely a very long rope which is suffered to trail from the car, and the effect of which is to prevent the balloon from changing its level in any material degree. If, for example, there should be a deposition of moisture upon, the silk, and the machine begins to descend in consequence, there will be no necessity for discharging ballast to remedy the increase of weight, for it is remedied, or counteracted, in an exactly just proportion, by the deposit on the ground of just so much of the end of the rope as is necessary. If, on the other hand, any circumstances should cause undue levity, and consequent ascent, this levity is immediately counteracted by the additional weight of rope upraised from the earth. Thus, the balloon can neither ascend nor descend, except within very narrow limits, and its resources, either in gas or ballast, remain comparatively unimpaired. When passing over an expanse of water, it becomes necessary to employ small kegs of copper or wood, filled with liquid ballast of a lighter nature than water. These float, and serve all the purposes of a mere rope on land. Another most important office of the guide-rope, is to point out the direction of the balloon. The rope drags, either on land or sea, while the balloon is free; the latter, consequently, is always in advance, when any progress whatever is made, a comparison, therefore, by means of the compass, of the relative positions of the two objects, will always indicate the course. In the same way, the angle formed by the rope with the vertical axis of the machine, indicates the velocity. When there is no angle-in other words, when the rope hangs perpendicularly, the whole apparatus is stationary; but the larger the angle, that is to say, the farther the balloon precedes the end of the rope, the greater the velocity; and the converse.

As the original design was to cross the British Channel, and alight as near Paris as possible, the voyagers had taken the precaution to prepare themselves with passports directed to all parts of the Continent, specifying the nature of the expedition, as in the case of the Nassau voyage, and entitling the adventurers to exemption from the usual formalities of office; unexpected events, however, rendered these passports superfluous.

The inflation was commenced very quietly at day-break, on Saturday morning, the 6th instant in the courtyard of Wheal-Vor House, Mr. Osborne's seat, about a mile from Penstruthal, in North Wales; and at 7 minutes past 11, everything being ready for departure, the balloon was set free, rising gently but steadily, in a direction nearly South; no use being made, for the first half hour, of either the screw or the rudder. We proceed now with the journal, as transcribed by Mr. Forsyth from the joint MSS. of Mr. Monck Mason and Mr. Ainsworth. The body of the journal, as given, is in the handwriting of Mr. Mason, and a P. S. is appended, each day, by Mr. Ainsworth, who has in preparation, and will shortly give the public a more minute and, no doubt, a thrillingly interesting account of the voyage.

THE JOURNAL

Saturday, April the 6th. - Every preparation likely to embarrass us having been made overnight, we commenced the inflation this morning at daybreak; but owing to a thick fog which encumbered the folds of the silk and rendered it unmanageable, we did not get through before nearly eleven o'clock. Cut loose, then, in high spirits, and rose gently but steadily, with a light breeze at North, which bore us in the direction of the Bristol Channel. Found the ascending force greater than we had expected; and as we arose higher and so got clear of

the cliffs, and more in the sun's rays, our ascent became very rapid. I did not wish, however, to lose gas at so early a period of the adventure, and so concluded to ascend for the present. We soon ran out our guide-rope; but even when we had raised it clear of the earth, we still went up very rapidly. The balloon was unusually steady, and looked beautifully. In about 10 minutes after starting, the barometer indicated an altitude of 15,000 feet. The weather was remarkably fine, and the view of the subjacent country-a most romantic one when seen from any point-was now especially sublime. The numerous deep gorges presented the appearance of lakes, on account of the dense vapors with which they were filled, and the pinnacles and crags to the South East, piled in inextricable confusion, resembling nothing so much as the giant cities of Eastern fable. We were rapidly approaching the mountains in the South, but our elevation was more than sufficient to enable us to pass them in safety.

In a few minutes we soared over them in fine style; and Mr. Ainsworth, with the seamen, was surprised at their apparent want of altitude when viewed from the car, the tendency of great elevation in a balloon being to reduce inequalities of the surface below, to nearly a dead level. At half-past eleven still proceeding nearly South, we obtained our first view of the Bristol Channel; and, in fifteen minutes afterward, the line of breakers on the coast appeared immediately beneath us, and we were fairly out at sea. We now resolved to let off enough gas to bring our guide-rope, with the buoys affixed, into the water. This was immediately done, and we commenced a gradual descent. In about 20 minutes our first buoy dipped, and at the touch of the second soon afterward, we remained stationary as to elevation. We were all now anxious to test the efficiency of the rudder and screw, and we put them both into requisition forthwith, for the purpose of altering our direction more to the eastward, and in a line for Paris. By means of the rudder we instantly effected the necessary change of direction, and our course was brought nearly at right angles to that of the wind; when we set in motion the spring of the screw, and were rejoiced to find it propel us readily as desired. Upon this we gave nine hearty cheers, and dropped in the sea a bottle, inclosing a slip of parchment with a brief account of the principle of the invention. Hardly, however, had we done with our rejoicings, when an unforeseen accident occurred which discouraged us in no little degree. The steel rod connecting the spring with the propeller was suddenly jerked out of place, at the car end, (by a swaying of the car through some movement of one of the two seamen we had taken up,) and in an instant hung dangling out of reach, from the pivot of the axis of the screw. While we were endeavoring to regain it, our attention being completely absorbed, we became involved in a strong current of wind from the East, which bore us, with rapidly increasing force, toward the Atlantic. We soon found ourselves driving out to sea at the rate of not less, certainly, than 50 or 60 miles an hour, so that we came up with Cape Clear, at some 40 miles to our North, before we had secured the rod, and had time to think what we were about. It was now that Mr. Ainsworth made an extraordinary but, to my fancy, a by no means unreasonable or chimerical proposition, in which he was instantly seconded by Mr. Holland-viz.: that we should take advantage of the strong gale which bore us on, and in place of beating back to Paris, make an attempt to reach the coast of North America. After slight reflection, I gave a willing assent to this bold proposition, which (strange to say) met with objection from the two seamen only. As the stronger party, however, we overruled their fears, and kept resolutely upon our course. We steered due West; but as the trailing of the buoys materially impeded our progress, and we had the balloon abundantly at command, either for ascent or descent, we first threw out fifty pounds of ballast, and then wound up (by means of

a windlass) so much of the rope as brought it quite clear of the sea. We perceived the effect of this manoeuvre immediately, in a vastly increased rate of progress; and, as the gale freshened, we flew with a velocity nearly inconceivable; the guide-rope flying out behind the car, like a streamer from a vessel. It is needless to say that a very short time sufficed us to lose sight of the coast. We passed over innumerable vessels of all kinds, a few of which were endeavoring to beat up, but the most of them lying to. We occasioned the greatest excitement on board all-an excitement greatly relished by ourselves, and especially by our two men, who, now under the influence of a dram of Geneva, seemed resolved to give all scruple, or fear, to the wind. Many of the vessels fired signal guns; and in all we were saluted with loud cheers (which we heard with surprising distinctness) and the waving of caps and handkerchiefs. We kept on in this manner throughout the day with no material incident, and, as the shades of night closed around us, we made a rough estimate of the distance traversed. It could not have been less than 500 miles, and was probably much more. The propeller was kept in constant operation, and, no doubt, aided our progress materially. As the sun went down, the gale freshened into an absolute hurricane, and the ocean beneath was clearly visible on account of its phosphorescence. The wind was from the East all night, and gave us the brightest omen of success. We suffered no little from cold, and the dampness of the atmosphere was most unpleasant; but the ample space in the car enabled us to lie down, and by means of cloaks and a few blankets we did sufficiently well.

P.S. [by Mr. Ainsworth.] The last nine hours have been unquestionably the most exciting of my life. I can conceive nothing more sublimating than the strange peril and novelty of an adventure such as this. May God grant that we succeed! I ask not success for mere safety to my insignificant person, but for the sake of human knowledge and-for the vastness of the triumph. And yet the feat is only so evidently feasible that the sole wonder is why men have scrupled to attempt it before. One single gale such as now befriends us-let such a tempest whirl forward a balloon for 4 or 5 days (these gales often last longer) and the voyager will be easily borne, in that period, from coast to coast. In view of such a gale the broad Atlantic becomes a mere lake. I am more struck, just now, with the supreme silence which reigns in the sea beneath us, notwithstanding its agitation, than with any other phenomenon presenting itself. The waters give up no voice to the Heavens. The immense flaming ocean writhes and is tortured uncomplainingly. The mountainous surges suggest the idea of innumerable dumb gigantic fiends struggling in impotent agony. In a night such as is this to me, a man lives-lives a whole century of ordinary life-nor would I forego this rapturous delight for that of a whole century of ordinary existence.

Sunday, the 7th. [Mr. Mason's MS.] This morning the gale, by 10, had subsided to an eight-or nine-knot breeze (for a vessel at sea), and bears us, perhaps, 30 miles per hour, or more. It has veered, however, very considerably to the North; and now, at sundown, we are holding our course due West, principally by the screw and rudder, which answer their purposes to admiration. I regard the project as thoroughly successful, and the easy navigation of the air in any direction (not exactly in the teeth of a gale) as no longer problematical. We could not have made head against the strong wind of yesterday, but, by ascending, we might have got out of its influence, if requisite. Against a pretty stiff breeze, I feel convinced, we can make our way with the propeller. At noon, today, ascended to an elevation of nearly 25,000 feet, (about the height of Cotopaxi) by discharging ballast. Did this to search for a more direct

current, but found none so favorable as the one we are now in. We have an abundance of gas to take us across this small pond, even should the voyage last 3 weeks. I have not the slightest fear for the result. The difficulty has been strangely exaggerated and misapprehended. I can choose my current, and should I find all currents against me, I can make very tolerable headway with the propeller. We have had no incidents worth recording. The night promises fair.

P.S. [By Mr. Ainsworth.] I have little to record, except the fact (to me quite a surprising one) that, at an elevation equal to that of Cotopaxi, I experienced neither very intense cold, nor headache, nor difficulty of breathing; neither, I find, did Mr. Mason, nor Mr. Holland, nor Sir Everard. Mr. Osborne complained of constriction of the chest-but this soon wore off. We have flown at a great rate during the day, and we must be more than half way across the Atlantic. We have passed over some 20 or 30 vessels of various kinds, and all seem to be delightfully astonished. Crossing the ocean in a balloon is not so difficult a feat after all. Omne ignotum pro magnifico. Mem.: at 25,000 feet elevation the sky appears nearly black, and the stars are distinctly visible; while the sea does not seem convex (as one might suppose) but absolutely and most unequivocally concave.*

* "Mr. Ainsworth has not attempted to account for this phenomenon, which however, is quite susceptible of explanation. A line dropped from an elevation of 25,000 feet, perpendicularly to the surface of the earth (or sea), would form the perpendicular of a right-angled triangle, of which the base would extend from the right angle to the horizon, and the hypothenuse from the horizon to the balloon. But the 25,000 feet of altitude is little or nothing, in comparison with the extent of the prospect. In other words, the base and hypothenuse of the supposed triangle would be so long, when compared with the perpendicular, that the two former may be regarded as nearly parallel. In this manner the horizon of the aeronaut would appear to be on a level with the car. But, as the point immediately beneath him seems, and is, at a great distance below him, it seems, of course, also, at a great distance below the horizon. Hence the impression of concavity; and this impression must remain, until the elevation shall bear so great a proportion to the extent of prospect, that the apparent parallelism of the base and hypothenuse disappears-when the earth's real convexity must appear.

Monday, the 8th. [Mr. Mason's MS.] This morning we had again some little trouble with the rod of the propeller, which must be entirely remodelled, for fear of serious accident-I mean the steel rod, not the vanes. The latter could not be improved. The wind has been blowing steadily and strongly from the North-East all day; and so far fortune seems bent upon favoring us. Just before day, we were all somewhat alarmed at some odd noises and concussions in the balloon, accompanied with the apparent rapid subsidence of the whole machine. These phenomena were occasioned by the expansion of the gas, through increase of heat in the atmosphere, and the consequent disruption of the minute particles of ice with which the network had become encrusted during the night. Threw down several bottles to the vessels below. Saw one of them picked up by a large ship-seemingly one of the New York line packets. Endeavored to make out her name, but could not be sure of it. Mr. Osbornes telescope made it out something like "Atalanta." It is now 12 at night, and we are still going nearly West, at a rapid pace. The sea is peculiarly phosphorescent.

P.S. [By Mr. Ainsworth.] It is now 2 A.M., and nearly calm, as well as I can judge-but it is very difficult to determine this point since we move with the air so completely. I have not slept since quitting Wheal-Vor, but can stand it no longer, and must take a nap. We cannot be far from the American coast.

Tuesday, the 9th. [Mr. Ainsworth's MS.] One, P.M. We are in full view of the low coast of South Carolina. The great problem is accomplished. We have crossed the Atlantic-fairly and easily crossed it in a balloon! God be praised! Who shall say that anything is impossible hereafter?

The Journal here ceases. Some particulars of the descent were communicated, however, by Mr. Ainsworth to Mr. Forsyth. It was nearly dead calm when the voyagers first came in view of the coast, which was immediately recognized by both the seamen, and by Mr. Osborne. The latter gentleman having acquaintances at Fort Moultrie, it was immediately resolved to descend in its vicinity. The balloon was brought over the beach (the tide being out and the sand hard, smooth, and admirably adapted for a descent), and the grapnel let go, which took firm hold at once. The inhabitants of the Island, and of the Fort, thronged out, of course, to see the balloon; but it was with the greatest difficulty that any one could be made to credit the actual voyage-the crossing of the Atlantic. The grapnel caught at 2 P.M. precisely; and thus the whole voyage was completed in 75 hours; or rather less, counting from shore to shore. No serious accident occurred. No real danger was at any time apprehended. The balloon was exhausted and secured without trouble; and when the MS. from which this narrative is compiled was despatched from Charleston, the party were still at Fort Moultrie. Their further intentions were not ascertained; but we can safely promise our readers some additional information either on Monday or in the course of the next day, at furthest.

This is unquestionably the most stupendous, the most interesting, and the most important undertaking ever accomplished or even attempted by man. What magnificent events may ensue, it would be useless now to think of determining.

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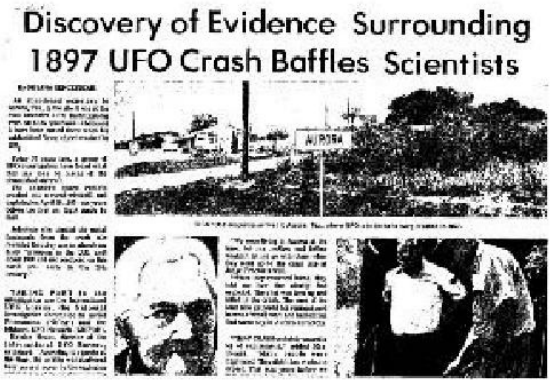
The Great Laxative Prank of World War II

by peashooter85 December 5th 2014, 6:00:00 pm

During World War II, Germany's fleet of U-Boats (submarines) nearly brought the British to their knees as they disrupted Britain's vital supply lines with the rest of the world. It was top priority that the Allies destroy, cripple, or hinder the U-Boat fleet as the British relied heavily on the precious cargo of supplies and reinforcements from the United States and the Commonwealth. In an earlier post, I detailed how the British SOE (Special Operations Executive) used itching powder to debilitate U-Boat crewman. That was not the only childish prank pulled by the British during World War II against the U-Boat fleet. Rather, an even more ambitious operation was conducted, making use of potent laxatives.

For centuries many Norwegians have depending on fishing for a livelihood. So word spread quickly when the German occupiers requisitioned the years entire sardine catch from Oslo. Norwegian resistance quickly learned that the sardines were to become a part of a U-Boat's standard rations, and passed the information to the SOE while requesting as much croton oil as the British could supply. When ingested, croton oil has a powerful laxative effect, inflicting the worst case of the runs one could possibly suffer. The SOE smuggled as much croton oil to the Norwegian Resistance as they could, who then passed it on to workers of Oslo's fish canneries. The workers then dosed the vegetable oil used in canning the sardines with the croton oil.

The results of the sardine deception are not well known. It is unknown if the act of sabotage decreased the performance of the U-Boat fleet, and it is unlikely that a bad case of the runs sunk any submarines. However, the mere thought of 50 men enclosed in a cramped 200 foot long space airtight space all losing bowel control with only one available toilet is a truly horrifying thought. It was a small edge for the Allies, but small edges can make or break great empires.


Discovery of Evidence Surrounding 1897 UFO Crash Baffles Scientists

In an event that has been called a "colorful piece of Americana", the Aurora, Texas airship crash is viewed as farfetched and contrived by skeptics and the first Roswell by the UFO community. The story began when a cotton broker and part-time reporter, S.E. Haydon, wrote an article for the Dallas Morning News that chronicled the crash of an airship in the small town of Aurora, approximately forty miles northwest of Fort Worth.

About 6 o'clock this morning the early risers of Aurora were astonished at the sudden appearance of the airship which has been sailing throughout the country. It was traveling due north, and much nearer the earth than before. Evidently some of the machinery was out of order, for it was making a speed of only ten or twelve miles an hour, and gradually settling toward earth. It sailed over the public square and when it reached the north part of town [it] collided with the tower of Judge Proctor's windmill and went to pieces with a terrific explosion, scattering debris over several acres of ground, wrecking the windmill and water tank and destroying the judge's flower garden. The pilot of the ship is supposed to have been the only one aboard, and while his remains are badly disfigured, enough of the original has been picked up to show that he was not an inhabitant of this world.

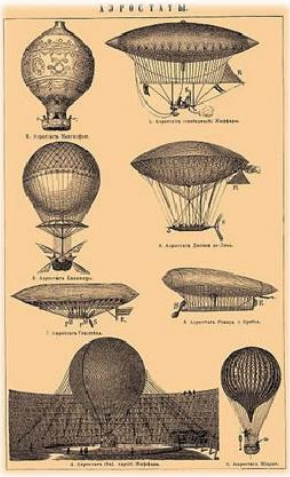
Mr. T. J. Weems, the U.S. Signal Service officer at this place and an authority on astronomy, gives it as his opinion that he [the pilot] was a native of the planet Mars. Papers found on his person-evidently the records of his travels are written in some unknown hieroglyphics, and cannot be deciphered. This ship was too badly wrecked to form any conclusion as to its construction or motive power. It was built of an unknown metal, resembling somewhat a mixture of aluminum and silver, and it must have weighed several tons. The town today is full of people who are viewing the wreckage and gathering specimens of strange metal from the debris. The pilot's funeral will take place at noon tomorrow.

~Dallas Morning News, April 19, 1897

Legend states that the pilot of the craft and a portion of the debris from the airship were buried in the Aurora cemetery and a small rock with a crude carving of his craft was placed above his burial site. The rest of the debris from the Proctor farm was placed inside of a well on the farm and the site was covered over.

In the days leading up to the Aurora story there had been reports from many locations around north Texas regarding sightings of mysterious airships. Although some of the reports were extravagant, it appears that most of the descriptions of the airship paralleled each other. The craft was being propelled by some form of a machine and was cigar shaped. These two facts

are common in most of these stories. Mr. C. G. Williams of Greenville, Texas stated that he had come into contact with the "cigar shaped" airship and its inventor in a field near Greenville. He went on to say that the inventor and two assistants were making adjustments to the craft as it sat on the ground.



By the time that the 1897 Aurora story blasted onto the pages, airships were not new to mankind. Although balloons had been around for centuries, controlled flight of balloons would officially be obtained in 1784, when Jean-Pierre Blanchard, using a balloon with a hand turned propeller, crossed the English Channel. A year later he attached fixed wings to his balloon and once again crossed the channel with his hand cranked propelled balloon. Many historians would agree that Blanchard's 1784 and 85 flights were the birth of controlled flight airships. In 1852, Henri Gifford successfully tested the first powered flight when he attached a small steam engine to his "cigar shaped" balloon. The 1880's would see the birth of electric powered and gas powered airships. By the 1890's, the balloon was being replaced by rigid airships.

Is it possible that the rural farming community of Aurora did not know the full scope of the emerging technology in airships? Aurora, Texas was plagued with a series of tragedies in the 1890's that could answer that question. The town experienced a spotted fever epidemic that wiped out a large portion of the population. The cotton crop failed at least twice in that decade and the railroad lines had never made it to Aurora. The airships of the time would have been completely foreign to the residents of rural America. Many sightings of the "mysterious airships" were being seen throughout rural north Texas in April of 1897. If the inventor of a craft was performing flight tests over the region, then, it is possible that the pilot could have collided with Judge Proctor's windmill resulting in a "terrific explosion" that could have disfigured the pilot beyond recognition. But is that what really happened?

In the late 1960's, columnist Frank Tolbert from the Dallas Morning News began investigating the Aurora story about the same time that Aurora came to attention of the UFO community. Tolbert uncovered information that some railroad telegraph operators in Iowa actually started the reports of the "mysterious airships" and the story spread to Texas. A railroad man in Fort Worth, named Joseph E. Scully, claimed that he and his crew sighted an airship near Hawkins, Texas. Because Scully was well respected in the railroad community no one ever questioned the validity of airships flying around north Texas. But Scully knew that the stories had been contrived by the telegraph operators and Tolbert would later label the incident as "The Great Truthful Scully Hoax". Years later, UFO researcher, Kevin Randle, uncovered an aging telegraph operator who claimed that he was the individual who put the false stories over the wires. In the end Frank Tolbert wrote that the Aurora crash was "probably a non-event" and concluded that the story was in conjunction with falsified airship stories.

Then in 1973 the story of the Aurora crash gained national media when the crudely carved stone in the Aurora cemetery disappeared and the supposed gravesite of the pilot, now being

called the" spaceman's grave" was allegedly desecrated. The event apparently happened in the late night hours of June 14, 1973, and was written about by Dallas Morning News writer Bill Case on July 4. Case had already been writing a series of stories when the late night theft occurred so Case went to Aurora to get to the root of the 1897 event. He interviewed a number of Aurora residents including Oscar Lowery. Oscar was eleven years old in April of 1897 and didn't remember any crashes or explosions around that time. He went on to say that the U.S Signal Service officer, T.J. Weems was actually the blacksmith in Aurora. Case looked into town records and found no mention of the crash or the "spaceman". Even more interesting, Bill Case found no record of the burial of the pilot within the cemetery records or the town's records. Etta Pegues, Aurora's town historian was ten years old in 1897. She added a lot to the story when she stated in 1973 that Judge Proctor had never had a windmill on his property. It was later said of Bill Case's investigation into the Aurora airship crash, by another researcher, "It appears now that the incident was exploited for publicity!"

In the years that have followed, UFO investigators and organizations have descended on Aurora, Texas in an attempt to find proof that what was reported in the Dallas Morning News on April 19, 1897, by S. E. Haydon, is proof that an extraterrestrial craft crashed in the town, and that the body placed in the Aurora cemetery was the body of an alien visitor. Investigators with metal detectors have scoured the former farm of Judge Proctor turning up only license plates, and aged pieces of iron. The well in which the debris from the crash was supposedly dumped has been excavated and yielded nothing out of the ordinary. The Town of Aurora has refused exhumation requests of the alleged "spaceman" and contends that they will continue to do so. Because of the amount of damage that was being created by visitors to the site, the town passed an ordinance banning investigations within the cemetery, however before that happened, ground penetrating radar failed to reveal anything conclusive. Furthermore, there are no individuals, museums or historical societies that possess a single piece of the wreckage or the papers containing the strange "hieroglyphs" that detailed the pilot's travels. There are no personal records, (diaries, personal records, bills for removal of the debris or burial of body, etc.) that have surfaced indicating that the incident ever even occurred.

StrangeHistory.org has concluded that the one statement by historian and author, Etta Pegues, explains what happened in Aurora, Texas on April 17, 1897. "It was all a hoax cooked up by Haydon and a bunch of men sitting around in the general store." Reporter S. E. Haydon knew that the town was dying. Using the "Scully Hoax" that was taking place at the time as a catalyst, Haydon talked to several people of the town about how to turn the town into a tourist attraction, thus saving the town. On April 19, 1897 he made his attempt with his story to the Dallas Morning News and The Great Aurora Airship Crash was born. To date no evidence of the crash has been proven.

But there was a house fire in the early morning hours of April 17, 1897!

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Centre College, located in Danville, is one of Kentucky's oldest institutions of higher learning, and is consistently ranked as one of the top liberal arts colleges in America. But for several months in 1862, the school was the site of nightmarish spectacle, as it was transformed into a hospital for wounded soldiers during the civil war.

The battle of Perryville was the only major battle of the Civil War fought on Kentucky soil. The climax of a planned Confederate invasion of Kentucky, Confederate and Union forces clashed at the small town about 12 miles east of Danville on October 1, 1862. In a single day of battle, nearly 7,500 men were killed or wounded.

Even before the battle, Confederate troops had seized several buildings on Centre's campus. One of these, the building known as Old Centre, was put to use as a hospital for the many men who had fallen sick during the campaign. Young women from Danville were pressed into service as nurses. Old Centre was already filling with feverish and weary men.But it was after the battle that the real chaos began.

On October 2nd, wagonload after wagonload of maimed and bleeding Confederate soldiers began arriving in Danville and filling every room on every floor of Old Centre. The halls were heavy with the stench of blood, sweat, and vomit as the Doctors rushed from patient to patient. The air was filled with cries of screaming men, as Doctors performed crude amputations with no anesthetic.

The Chaos only deepened five days later, when Union forces arrived in town and expelled the vastly outnumbered Confederate forces. Old Centre emptied out, only to fill again with Union wounded. The same townswomen who had been tending only yesterday to Confederate forces now tended Union wounded.

The toll of human life continued to be collected. Parties of soldiers were stationed on campus with the sole duty of transferring the dead to Bellvue Cemetery for burial. Students, professors, and residents all left behind records noting the horrible sites, sounds, and smells of those days.

The Union army occupied Centre for several months following the battle, but according to campus legend a legacy of those bloody days can still be seen today.

The Grey Lady is a figure reported to have been seen numerous times in the vicinity of Old Centre. She is descried a wispy, transparent figure dressed in the heavy hoop skirts of the Civil War era. She is always seen around the grounds of Old Centre. Whenever she is seen, she always also appears to be in a hurry, rushing too or from the former hospital building, apparently on a mission of mortal urgency. Any attempt to intercept or run after her proves fruitless, as she instantly disappears.

Who is this mysterious figure? The story says that she is the spirit of the daughter of a

prominent Danville family. This kind and compassionate young woman volunteered to act as a nurse when the Confederate forces arrived. When the Confederates left, she voluntarily stayed to help the wounded Union soldiers, caring more about the humanity of the wounded young men than which side they fought for. She was beloved by both sides for her kindness to the injured and dying men.

But her compassion came at a price. Because of the unsanitary conditions in Old Centre, she soon caught a fever, but continued to tend to patients and run errands for the doctors, even though her own health was rapidly failing. It's said that she met her end running to town on one last errand for one of the Union doctors, when she collapsed at the edge of campus and died.

Is this brave, compassionate soul still trying to help fallen soldiers? Does she run across Centre's campus trying to complete the vital mission she was sent on, even though those she sought to help are a long time gone? Centre students who see her say that when she passes by, they feel no fear, but only a great, overwhelming sadness. She is a respected part of life at Centre, the spirit of a woman who reached out to both sides with love and compassion in an awful time of war.

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The Harrodsburg Mystery Grave

In the first half of the 19th Century, Harrodsburg was a prosperous town, made wealthy by trade and the easy access to the Kentucky river. It was also the crown jewel in Kentucky's antebellum social scene. The healing waters of Graham Springs and the grand hotel there drew the planter class year-round for music, dances, gossip, and all the other pleasures of Old Kentucky's social life. But at one of these dances, a young woman danced herself to death, and her ghost still walks the town.

The grounds of what was one Graham's Springs Sanatorium are around Young Park on the south end of Harrodsburg. At the height of its popularity, wealthy patrons from all across the South flocked to the springs and the accompanying resort hotel. Throughout the summer, the hotel would hold grand balls, where bourbon flowed as freely as the gossip and the dancing went on late into the night accompanied by a band composed of enslaved African-American musicians.

It was on one such night in 1840 that a beautiful young woman walked into the ballroom on the arm of a handsome escort. The woman's gown was luxurious, excellently tailored with an eye towards even the smallest whim of the current fashions. Dark eyes shown out from pale skin and a crown of lovingly curled hair. The patrons at the springs were in awe as the lady and her gentleman companion glided with grace and precision across the dance floor.

Nobody in the hotel knew this beautiful young couple. They hadn't been seen earlier in the day taking the waters or dining in the hotel. They seemed to have arrived only to dance.

But late in the evening, the mysterious woman fell from the arms of her companion and collapsed on the dance floor. The music stopped and everyone in the room rushed to the side of the young woman. Everyone, that is, except her companion, who disappeared out the door in the confusion. But nobody noticed he had disappeared at first, because of the alarm that spread quickly through the room. The beautiful unknown dancer lay dead on the floor.

A search began for the identity of the young woman. No trace of her companion could be found. None of the patrons in the hotel nor any of the townspeople recognized either one of them. The owner of the spring, Dr. Graham, was understandably alarmed that an unknown young woman had died at on his dance floor, but he thought that surely such an obviously wealthy and well-dressed young woman would be missed by someone. He sent word out across the state, hoping to find someone to claim the body. But no one did. Eventually, Graham decided to burry her on the grounds of the hotel, in a simple grave with a marker that stands still today and reads:

Unknown

Hallowed and Hushed be the place of the dead.

Step Softly.

Bow Head.

Who was this mysterious young woman? One story that emerged a number of years after her death was that she was a Tazwell, Tennessee woman named Mollie Black Sewell, the wife of a traveling actor named Joe Sewell. She had married him impulsively, attracted by his glamour, but sound found that she had married an abusive cad who beat her and routinely played around with other women. Mollie fled for Harrodsburg and the glamorous life she had expected, finding a companion with similar interests on his way. This story comes from a man named Joe Rupp, who had been told by Joe Sewell when he was a boy that his wife had "Danced herself to death in Harrodsburg." Rupp told this story to a reported years later, when Sewell was already dead, and so whether or not the mysterious young woman really was Mollie Black Sewell has never been verified.

But you might still have a chance to ask her who she is. Ever since that night in 1840, late on warm, clear summer nights residents of Harrodsburg have reported seeing a pale, whit figure dressed in the height of antebellum luxury walking the grounds near the mystery grave. Maybe some brave soul can hide himself by the grave on one such night, waiting for the ghostly figure to appear. Perhaps if he's gentlemanly enough, the ghost might even speak to him and reveal her secrets.

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Photo: Larry D. Moore/commons.wikimedia.org

Driskill Hotel

The Driskill Hotel in Austin, Texas is considered by many to be the most active as far as unexplained phenomenon in all of the area.

Opened for the very first time in the year of 1886 on the 20th day of December, this was considered to be the **"Hotel of Dreams"** for the ever-popular cattle professional by the name of Jesse Lincoln Driskill. Driskill had purchased the property space where the hotel would be constructed just a year earlier for less than $8,000. By the time this spectacular hotel was completed, it ended up resulting in over $400,000 as far as expenses. Here, you will learn some facts about the haunted Driskill Hotel in Austin, Texas.

The Driskill Hotel has been considered to be one of the most popular locations for well established figures in and around the area. Politicians, celebrities, and more have conducted business within the walls of this spectacular hotel. Driskill himself truly loved the luxurious hotel that he created in Austin, Texas. Upon his passing from this life to the next, it is believed that the business guru remained in the structure – in spirit that is – literally. Several individuals who worked in the hotel before and after **Jesse Lincoln Driskill's** death have claimed to continue to feel his presence even after he was laid to rest. The following indicates some of the other hauntings that seem to occur within this spectacular hotel:

1. There is a room, referred to as that of 525 that is rumored to be one of the most haunted in all of the structure. There is a story of tragedy and despair that surrounds the room, though it is unknown if the stories are true, historically. This is the story that is often referred to as the **"suicide brides".** It is believed that two young women, who were on their honeymoon in the hotel twenty years apart, took their own lives in the bathroom of the room. As a result, the hotel staff blocked off the bathroom area, and shut down the room completely. When reconstruction efforts began in the year of 1998, this room was allowed to be opened. Several strange occurrences made themselves evident when this occurred – all the way from unexplained leaks to visions and sensations of apparitions!

2. There was a lady who committed suicide on the fourth floor of the Driskill Hotel. Many

individuals claim to have observed what appears to be a spirit of a female out of the corner of their eye while on this floor, but when they look to see who is standing there, there is actually no one available at all. In addition to this, it often sounds as if a female is whispering on the floor. While very faint, those who have heard it do not forget it very easily. In some instances, a woman has been heard crying on the fourth floor by hotel staff – even when no one is staying on that particular floor. It is believed that all of these occurrences are related to the woman who took her own life on the floor.

3. There is a story documented in history in which the young girl of a popular Senator of the time met her fate while chasing a ball along the **"Grand" staircase** in the hotel. This occurred in the year of 1887. It was reported a week after her death that she was up and playing at the hotel with her little ball. This incident was actually the first recording of the paranormal at the rumored haunted Driskill Hotel.

As you can see, there are many recordings of hauntings at this spectacular hotel. While there are many different paranormal events that have taken place at this hotel, this lists the most popular cases. If you are interested in unexplained phenomenon, visiting the Driskill Hotel in Austin, Texas is sure to amuse you! Check for the lowest price, get directions, view photos, and read the reviews and traveler tips for the Driskill Hotel.

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BLACK AGGIE

The Haunted History of One of America's Most Mysterious Graveyard Monuments

by Troy Taylor

(Right) Black Aggie as she looked in 1966. As the stories claimed, no grass would grow in front of the monument (Photo courtesy of Pat Bailey)

There are many ghostly legends involving haunted, glowing and moving gravestones in America. While these tombstones can certainly be strange, and even a little spooky, there are few that can be as eerie as the baleful stare of a piece of graveyard statuary. Many of these monuments are nothing more than the peaceful, angelic forms of heavenly messengers.... but look into their cold, stone eyes.

Does there seem to be something hidden there, lurking just below the surface? Or is that shadowed gaze just the result of the elements beating down on this figure year after year?

There is no doubt about it. Graveyard statuary runs the entire gamut between beautiful and frightening. During the early part of the century, craftsmen were allowed to express themselves in cemetery art and create sculptures that included seductive angels, surrogate mourners and even the deceased themselves. Many of these sculptures have gained a reputation for being something other than just the ordinary artwork of a cemetery.... something which may not be of this world at all!

When General Felix Agnus, the publisher of the Baltimore "American", died in the 1925, he was buried in Pikesville's Druid Ridge Cemetery, right outside of Baltimore. On his grave was placed a rather strange statue. It was a large, black mourning figure. The statue's creator (sort of), Augustus St. Gaudens, called her "Grief."

In the daylight hours, the figure was regarded as a beautiful addition to the graveyard art of the cemetery. The sculptor was one of the premier artisans in Maryland at the turn-of-the-century and the statue was highly regarded..... at least until darkness fell and the legends began.

Augustus St. Gaudens was a premiere American sculptor of the late 1800's. Before his death in 1907, he created some of the most honored works in America, including the figure of Diana that once topped Madison Square Gardens and monuments to American heroes and statesmen like Lincoln and Sherman. One of his greatest pieces of work was a memorial for Marian Adams, the wife of Henry Adams. Marian, called "Clover" by her friends had fallen into a dark

depression after the death of her father in 1885. In December of that year, she committed suicide by drinking potassium.

Marion Adams

Henry Adams plunged into his despair and in search of comfort, traveled to Japan in June 1886 with his friend, artist John La Farge. When he returned from his trip, he decided to replace the simple headstone that he had ordered for his beloved "Clover" in Washington's Rock Creek Cemetery with a more elaborate memorial. He turned to St. Gaudens and asked him to create something with an "eastern" feel to it, perhaps combining the images of the Buddha with the work of Michelangelo.

The endeavor took over four years, frustrating Adams, but creating what some called "one of the most powerful and expressive pieces in the history of American art, before or since. It was placed in the cemetery in 1891 and Adams was delighted with both the design and the setting. The statue was never officially named, known as the "Adams Memorial" and later by the more popular name of "Grief". The stories for this nickname vary. Some say that the statue was dubbed this by St. Gaudens himself and others say the name was coined by Mark Twain, who viewed the memorial in 1906.

Strangely, the original monument was something of an enigma itself. Henry Adams refused to ever speak publicly about his wife's death and would never officially name the monument. He also refused to acknowledge its popular nickname. Thanks to Adams' silence and the fame of his esteemed political family (he was the grandson of President John Quincy Adams), many became curious about the monument. Adams furthered this curiosity by refusing to have an inscription placed on the monument and by placing it behind a barrier of trees and shrubs. The challenge of finding it only fueled the public interest, first by word of mouth and later in guidebooks and magazine articles. The grave became a popular site for the curious, especially as the statue was so unnerving to look at. It was fascinating that it became the subject of an incredible piracy by a sculptor named Eduard L.A. Pausch.

It would be from the original Adams design that the sculptor created his own, unauthorized copy of "Grief" in the early 1900's. The statue would later come to be known as the infamous "Black Aggie".

The Creation of the Adams Memorial

Within a few months of the statue being placed on Marian Adams' grave, Henry Adams reported that someone had apparently made a partial casting of the piece. He wrote to Edward Robinson in 1907 that "Even now, the head of the figure bears evident traces of some surreptitious casting, which the workmen did not even take the pains to wash off."

The copy would go on to become even more famous than the original!

General Felix Agnus purchased the Pausch copy of the sculpture in 1905, perhaps after having admired the original work at the Adams grave. Why he decided to use the copy to grace his family tomb, instead of commissioning an original work, is unknown... but perhaps something about the Pausch statue compelled him to own it. We will never know for sure.

Felix Agnus was born in France in 1839. At the age of only 13, he traveled around the world and at 20, fought in the army of Napolean III against Austria and later served with General Garibaldi's forces in Italy. In 1860, he came to New York and went to work as a silver chaser and sculptor at Tiffany's. When the Civil War broke out, he enlisted as a private in the Union Army and began a war record so incredible that he was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General by age 26. He saw action in dozens of battles, including Big Bethel, Richmond, the Siege of Port Hudeson and the Battle of Gaines' Mills. He was wounded more than 12 times by both bullet and saber. His friend, writer H.L. Mencken later said that Angus "had so much lead in him that he rattled when he walked."

After a severe shoulder injury at Gaines' Mills, then Lieutenant Agnus was brought to Baltimore for treatment. There, he met Charles Carroll Fulton, the publisher of the Baltimore "American" newspaper and his daughter, Annie, who nursed Agnus back to health. Fulton met the young officer at the Pratt Street Pier when the medical steamer docked and took him

to his home for care and rest. When the war was over, he returned to Baltimore and asked Annie to marry him. She quickly accepted. After that, Agnus continued his remarkable career, working briefly in the internal revenue office, then as Consul to Londonderry, Ireland for the United States Senate. He later retired from this position to take over for his father-in-law at the newspaper. He remained the publisher of the newspaper until his death.

In 1905, Agnus began construction of a family monument in Druid Ridge Cemetery. It was during this time that he purchased Black Aggie and then had a monument and pedestal created that would closely match the setting of the Adams Memorial in Washington. The first burial at the site was of the General's mother, who had been brought over from France.

A year later, the widow of the artist Augustus St. Gaudens sent a letter to Henry Adams to inform him of the poor reproduction that had been done of "Grief" and which was now resting in Druid Ridge. There was nothing they could do legally about the theft of the design so St. Gauden's widow traveled to Baltimore to see the site for herself. She discovered a nearly identical statue, seated on a similar stone, but with the name "Agnus" inscribed on the base. She also noted that the stone was a nondescript gray color and not the pink granite of the original. The Baltimore site also did not have the bench and the rest of the stonework as the original Washington gravesite had.

The Angus gravesite in Druid Ridge Cemetery

After seeing the site, Mrs. St. Gaudens declared that General Angus "must be a good deal of a barbarian to copy a work of art in such a way". Agnus quickly responded and claimed to be the innocent victim of unscrupulous art dealers. The artist's widow then requested that he give up the sculpture and file suit against the art dealers. Strangely, Agnus did file suit (and won a claim of over $4500) but he refused to give up the copy of the statue.

The General's wife, Annie, died in 1922 and Agnus himself died three years later at the age of 86. He was also laid to rest at the feet of "Aggie".... and shortly thereafter, her legend was born.

While the Agnus Monument seemed innocent enough in the daylight, those who encountered the statue in the darkness, gave her the nickname of "Black Aggie". To these people, she was a symbol of terror and her legend grew to become an occasional story in the local newspaper and of course, the private conversations of those who believed in a dark side. Where else could you find a statue whose eyes glowed red at the stroke of midnight?

The legend grew.... and it was said that the spirits of the dead rose from their graves to gather around her on certain nights and that living persons who returned her gaze were struck blind. Pregnant women who passed through her shadow (where strangely, grass never grew) would suffer miscarriages.

A local college fraternity decided to include Black Aggie in their initiation rites. Not really believing the stories, the candidates for membership were ordered to spend the night in the cold embrace of Black Aggie. Those who remember the statue recall her large, powerful hands. The stories claimed that the local fraternity initiates had to sit on Aggie's lap and one tale purports that "she once came to life and crushed a hapless freshman in her powerful grasp."

Other fraternity boys were equally as unlucky.... One night, at the stroke of midnight, the cemetery watchman heard a scream in the darkness. When he reached the Angus grave, he found a young man lying dead at the foot of the statue.... he had died of fright, or so the story goes. Just another legend that grew over the years into a ghost story? Maybe, and then, maybe not.

One morning in 1962, a watchman discovered that one of the angel's arms had been cut off during the night. The missing arm was later found in the trunk of a sheet metal worker's car, along with a saw. He told the judge that Black Aggie had cut off her own arm in a fit of grief and had given it to him. Apparently, the judge didn't believe him and the man went to jail.

However, a number of people did believe the man's strange story and almost every night, huge groups of people gathered in Druid Ridge Cemetery. The public attention gained by the news story brought the curiosity-seekers to the grave and the strange tales kept them coming back.

Were the stories told about Aggie merely "urban legends" and eerie tales told about a spooky piece of graveyard art? Some thought so... while others weren't so sure. One man that I was able to interview (who we'll call "Frank") grew up in the New Jersey area and became intrigued with the stories of Black Aggie, especially after a strange event that took place in the early 1950's. Was what happened just a coincidence... or something more? I'll let you be the judge!

One night, Frank and two of his friends came down to Baltimore from Atlantic City for a visit. They wanted to see some young women they had met previously, while the girls were in New Jersey on vacation. The group decided to go sightseeing and one of the stops they made that night was to see the legendary statue of Black Aggie. The young women took them to the cemetery and told them a story or two about the monument.
Frank and his friends walked over for a closer look, curious to see (as the girls told them) if anyone had placed coins in Aggie's hands for good luck, as was the local tradition. They didn't find any coins, but Frank's friend, "Freddy", thought it would be funny to snuff out his cigarette in Aggie's hand instead.

"We told him not to," Frank later recalled, "but Freddy just laughed. He didn't believe in any of that stuff..... about ten years later, Freddy was found in a dump in South Carolina. He had been shot in the back of the head, mafia-style. They never found out who did it."

Frank paused for a moment and appeared thoughtful. ""It's been many years now, but I will never forget the feeling that I had standing in front of Aggie that night... as if she knew the future and could see what lay ahead for us."

Such lurid tales brought many listeners and the Agnus grave site began to be trampled by teenagers and curiosity-seekers. Although Pikesville (where Druid Ridge is located) was fairly remote at the time, the site was visited, and vandalized, by hundreds or perhaps thousands of people over several decades. In addition to the statue's arm being stolen, hundreds of names and messages were scrawled on the statue, the granite base and the wall behind it. Today, these have been blasted away, although some evidence of the damage sadly remains.
Cemetery groundskeepers did everything they could to discourage visitors, including planting thorny shrubs around it, but they failed to keep people away. There is no indication as to why the cemetery was not better patrolled at night, but perhaps they just couldn't afford it. For every trespasser arrested, dozens of others managed to reach the site. A fence surrounds the grave of the Agnus family today, but back then, the cemetery was wide open, especially at night.

Eventually, the number of nighttime visitors and the destruction they caused became too much for the cemetery to handle.

By the 1960's, it had gotten so bad that the descendants of Agnus elected to donate Black Aggie to the Maryland Institute of Art Museum. However, this move never took place and the statue remained at her resting place for one more year, until 1967. On March 18, the Agnus family donated Aggie to the Smithsonian Institution for display.

For many years, this donation would prove to be quite an enigma for researchers who attempted to track down the whereabouts of Black Aggie.... you see, according to the Smithsonian, they didn't have her. Despite some people recalling that Aggie was displayed in the National Gallery for a brief period, officials at the Smithsonian claimed they had never displayed her at all. Conspiracy theorists "smelled a rat" and believed that perhaps she was simply placed in storage, rather than put on display... because of her cursed past. "Maybe, just maybe," wrote a columnist for the Baltimore Sun, "they're not taking any chances."

The real answer would not be as strange. Somewhere along the line, the staff at the Smithsonian gave Aggie away, which explains why she does not appear in their records. They had no interest in displaying her and instead, gave her to the National Museum of American Art, where she was then put into storage and never displayed. For years, she would remain in a dusty storeroom, shrouded in cobwebs, until recently... when Black Aggie would "rise from the dead"!

In 1996, a young Baltimore area writer named Shara Terjung did a story on Black Aggie for a small newspaper. After having been long fascinated with the legends, she became determined to track down the present location of the statue. Finally, shortly after Halloween, she got a call from a contact at the General Service Administration who was able to discover where the elusive Aggie had ended up. The statue can still be seen today at the Federal Courts building in Washington, in the rear courtyard of the Dolly Madison house.

The mysterious statue had finally been found!

Black Aggie may be gone from Druid Ridge Cemetery, but she's certainly not forgotten. "We still have people coming to Druid Ridge, asking for Black Aggie all the time," said one of the cemetery spokesmen in an interview. "I don't think there's a week that goes by when we don't get a call about it."

The Angus grave site is well cared for today and shows little sign of the desecration of the past. Grass grows now in the place where for many years it could not. The only lingering evidence of Black Aggie is a chipped area on the granite pedestal and a faint shadow where she once rested. At least that's the only lingering presence that can be seen... some say there is more. Who knows? Whether the Angus grave site was ever haunted or not, Black Aggie has left an indelible mark on not only Druid Ridge Cemetery... but the annals of the supernatural in America as well.

Black Aggie at the Dolly Madison House today

Return to the Ghosts of the Prairie Home Page

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Photo

Photo

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For many thousands of years people have lived and built communities in the region that makes up present day Lappland, Norrbotten and Västerbotten. ReSearch (in Swedish)ers who have interested themselves in the history of the northern provinces have found archaeological remains of earlier peoples which has led to a reassessment of the provinces history.

Six thousands years ago lived hunters and gatherers along the Little and Big Luleå Rivers and around Vuollerim. These people lived in a completely different climate than the present. Archaeologists have made interesting findings. Among other things, they have found flint from Russia which have lead them to think that maybe these people have wandered to the area from the east. Not only were the rivervalleys inhabited. Findings along the coast show that many of the islands were inhabited by earlier fishermen.

Many archaeological finds, dated back to the time of Christ, are from many of the larger rivers. From excavations of burialgrounds and other holy places, archaeologists have determined these to have been made by earlier ancestor to today's Laplanders.

The Laplanders are Scandinavia's aboriginal people. They were nomads who wandered freely over all of Scandinavia with their reindeer herds. They brought their own culture, traditions and language.

There are approximately 10 000 Laplanders still living in Sweden. Their nomadic life has changed considerable. Some Laplanders are still reindeer herders but many have other occupations.

The excellent arts and crafts produced by the Laplanders are often displayed in exhibitions during the summer seasons.

The Pite and Lule River Valleys are first mentioned in text dating from Middle Ages. The central power around the Lake Mälaren were interested in extending their control to the north. The Middle Ages are also the period when national boundaries became important. The Nöteborg Peace Treaty in 1323 marks the start of the struggle for control over Northern Scandinavia. All three of major powers in Northern Europe, Sweden/Finland, Norway/Denmark and Russia, laid claims to the region.

Formally the territory, known as Norrbotten and Lappland, was created in 1810. Sweden lost Finland to Russia and new national boundaries were drawn up. Two provinces was divided to

make three. They became Norrbotten, Lappland and Västerbotten.

Norrbotten and Lappland's modern development started when the demand for dried fish from the middle of Sweden increased. At about the same time the demand for furs also increased. The fish and furs were traded for implements, hemp, flour and silver in large markets in Torneå, Jokkmokk and Enontekis.

One way of getting more people from the south to the north of Sweden was the Lappmarks Proclamation of 1673 which reduced taxes for anyone willing to move to what was then called "Lappmark". During this period the trade increased. Wood and timber, tar and charcoal were above all the main merchandise. The timber industry has continued to be an important part of the industrial production in the provinces.

Today's Lappland, Norrbotten and Västerbotten are still dependent on it's natural resources.

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MOST OF THIS ARTICLE IS FROM THE RECOLLECTIONS OF VIRGEALIA "JILL" ELLIS OF KINGSPORT WRITTEN FOR THIS WEBSITE, AND ALSO EXCERPTS REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION FROM "ROTHERWOOD MANSION" UNDER THE HEADING "GHOSTS AND SPIRITS OF TENNESSEE" BY JOHN NORRIS BROWN, AND ALSO AN ARTICLE IN THE KINGSPORT TIMES-NEWS FROM OCTOBER 26, 1975. PICTURES OF SLAVE SCENES ARE GENERIC AND TAKEN FROM THE INTERNET.

Most people do not know that the stately Rotherwood Mansion, was once one of the largest slave plantations in East Tennessee.

The name "Rotherwood," remembers Jill Ellis, "immediately evokes images. One could easily imagine, romance." Rightly so, she says, because so many stories surrounding the "aura" associated with the name, are indeed rooted in romance, grandeur, intrigue, mystery, horror, and ghostly feelings, that still exist within the walls of the mansion.

VIRGEALIA "MAMA JILL" ELLIS ON THE OCCASION OF "VIRGEALIA ELLIS DAY IN KINGSPORT"

Mrs. Ellis' ancestry dates back to the Zion Hill plantation between Surgoinsville and Rogersville, Tennessee. Her family later settled into what is now Rotherwood Heights, north of the original plantation.

"I grew up on the 2,500 or more acre Rotherwood land," she remembers. "My mother, Inez

Looney was the cook, and my father James Looney was the chauffeur, the butler, and the mansion maitre 'd.

But let's go back MANY years before that, with information that has been passed down for generations.

Mrs. Ellis writes, "back in the late 18th century, 21-year-old Reverend Frederick A. Ross and his family inherited a vast acreage of land along the North and South Forks of the Holston River, from Bays Mountain on up almost to Virginia. Ross came into the area with his slaves and carriages and enormous wealth. Although he had many white indentured slaves, many of the black slaves he owned lived on plantation grounds at the present-day Rotherwood Heights.

So where did the name "Rotherwood" originate?

Mrs. Ellis says her research shows the name came from an old castle of Welsh-Celtic origin, and Ross was determined to have a home of magnitude and beauty. High on a hill, facing the river, the home he built even had a garden and pool on the roof. Slaves carried water up to the roof, to keep the pool filled. Columns, curved driveways, flowers, exotic florals with hanging gardens made Rotherwood the showplace and entertainment center of the region.

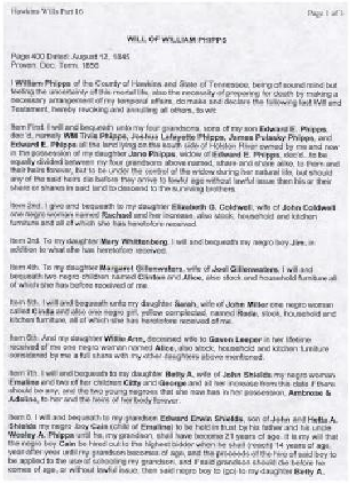
"Young Ross married Theodosia Vance of Washington County," she writes, "and they had about 12 children. But the showplace burned, and had to be rebuilt."

From the John Norris Brown website, writes "Ross was a kindly man, who had a very beautiful daughter named Rowena. She was well-liked by everyone in Rossville, which later down the line becames King's Port. She had been educated in the finest northern schools, and as a result she had many young men interested in marrying her. She did indeed fall in love with one young man, and were planning to marry. But he died tragically, when his boat capsized in the Holston River in front of Rotherwood Mansion, in clear sight of Rowena. She was very much affected by this, and became reclusive."

After two years, writes Mr. Brown on his website, she began to socialize again, and eventually announced her engagement to a rich young man from Knoxville. But tragedy struck again when he died of yellow fever. Once again, Rowena went into a deep depression. A decade later, she married and this time, had a daughter. When the daughter was six years

old, Rowena committed suicide by walking out into the river, after she thought she heard her first love calling to her. Today, it is said that her ghost still walks the banks of the Holston River, wearing her wedding dress, searching for her first love. Some have even said the ghost of her first suitor also haunts the mansion.

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT OF WILLIAM PHIPPS, WHICH ALSO WILLED JOSHUA PHIPPS THE LAND OF ROTHERWOOD---CLICK ON THE DOCUMENT FOR A LARGER PICTURE



WILL OF WILLIAM PHIPPS

Page 400 Dated: August 12, 1845
Proven: Dec. Term, 1850

I William Phipps of the County of Hawkins and State of Tennessee, being of sound mind but feeling the uncertainty of this mortal life, also the necessity of preparing for death by making a necessary arrangement of my temporal affairs, do make and declare this following last Will and Testament, hereby revoking and annulling all others, to wit:

Item First. I will and bequeath unto my four grandsons, sons of my son **Edward E. Phipps**, dec'd, namely **Wm Tivis Phipps, Joshua Lafayette Phipps, James Pulaski Phipps**, and **Edward E. Phipps** all the land lying on the south side of Holston River owned by me and now in the possession of my daughter **Jane Phipps**, widow of **Edward E. Phipps**, decd., to be equally divided between my four grandsons above named, share and share alike, to them and their heirs forever, But to be under the control of the widow during her natural life, but should any of the said heirs die before they arrive to lawful age without lawful issue then his or their share or shares in said land to descend to the surviving brothers.

Item 2nd. I give and bequeath to my daughter **Elizabeth G. Coldwell**, wife of **John Coldwell** one negro woman named **Rachael** and her increase, also stock, household and kitchen furniture and all of which she has heretofore received.

Item 3rd. To my daughter **Mary Whittenberg**, I will and bequeath my negro boy Jim, in addition to what she has heretofore received.

Item 4th. To my daughter **Margaret Gillenwaters**, wife of **Joel Gillenwaters**, I will and bequeath two negro children named **Elsiline** and **Alice**, also stock and household furniture all of which she has before received of me.

Item 5th. I will and bequeath unto my daughter **Sarah**, wife of **John Miller** one negro woman called **Linda** and also one negro girl, yellow complected, named **Rada**, stock, household and kitchen furniture, all of which she has heretofore received of me.

Item 6th. And my daughter **Willie Ann**, deceased wife to **Gaven Leeper** in her lifetime received of me one negro woman named **Alice**, also stock, household and kitchen furniture considered by me a full share with my other daughters above mentioned.

Item 7th. I will and bequeath to my daughter **Betty A.** wife of **John Shields** my negro woman **Emaline** and two of her children **Citty** and **George** and at her increase from this date if there should be any, and the two young negroes that she now has in her possession, **Ambrose & Adeline**, to her and the heirs of her body forever.

Item 8. I will and bequeath to my grandson **Edward Erwin Shields**, son of John and **Hetta A. Shields** my negro boy **Cain** (child of **Emaline**) to be held in trust by his father and his uncle **Wesley A. Phipps** until he, my grandson, shall have become 21 years of age. It is my will that the negro boy **Cain** be hired out to the highest bidder when he shall reach 14 years of age, year after year until my grandson becomes of age, and the proceeds of the hire of said boy to be applied to the use of schooling my grandson, and if said grandson should die before he comes of age, or without lawful issue, then said negro boy to go to my daughter **Betty A.**

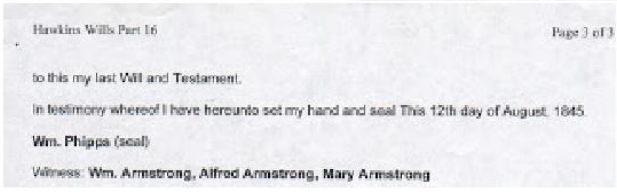
Item 9. To my son **Joshua Phipps** I will and bequeath in addition to what he has already received of me a negro boy named **Sam.**

Item 10. To my son **William P. Phipps,** I will and bequeath in addition to what he has already received of me a tract or parcel of land containing 10 acres be the same more or less, of the lower end of my home place. Beginning at a post oak and black oak conditional corner of my tract and the Hensel tract now owned by **Wm** Lyons or son, running south sixty west with a new marked line to the back line of the old Erwin grant, thus south twenty five east along the old line to the corner ash and birech near a small spring at the foot of a large hill, being the corner between the **Mansfellar** tract and the tract on which I now live. Then north sixty six east along the old marked line to a black oak and sweet gum, thence due north along the old line to the beginning, to him and his heirs forever.

Item 11. To my son **Thomas H. Phipps**, I will nothing more, he having already received his full share in cash, negro &c.

Item 12. To my son **James L. Phipps** I will and bequeath a tract or parcel of land purchased of **Margaret Surgoine** containing 140 acres more or less, bounded as follows: Beginning on the bank of Holston River in a small island on an ash tree for corner a mulberry Lyons & box elder pointers then along a marked line between **William Armstrong** and myself south sixty nine and a half, west to white oak on the old Patton line, sourwood, gum and hickory pointers, then with the old **Patton** line south twenty five east fifty poles to a white oak corner black oak pointer, then along a marked line formerly the line between **Margaret Surgoine** and myself to the bank of Holston River to the corner elm, then up the meanders of the river to the beginning to him and his heirs forever. Also three negroes, to wit: **Mima, Charles & Bob**, also one bed & furniture with a full share of stock and farming utensils &c, all of which he has received.

Item 13. I will and bequeath to my son **Wesley A. Phipps** the plantation that I now live on bounded as follows, to wit: Beginning at the corner elm on the river bank, then with the marked tree formerly between **Margaret Surgoine** and myself to a white oak corner and black oak pointer on the old **Patton** Line, then along the said **Patton** line south forty five degrees east to where **Wm. P. Phipps'** line intersects with the old **Patton** line, then along the said **Wm. P. Phipps'** line to the post oak and black oak corner, then along the said conditional line between Lyons and myself to the river on a black oak and hickory corner, then up the meanders of the river to the beginning containing 400 acres more or less, to him and his heirs forever; also three negroes named **Coty, Powel** (and deceased girl) **Julia**; also one bed and furniture, stock of all kinds, farming utensils, &c, and at my death, I will that he have all my personal property not otherwise disposed of. It is also my will that my son **Wesley A. Phipps** legacy be charged with all my lawful debts which may be due from me at my decease & that he pay the same. Also give me a decent and respectable support as long as I live with the use of my old dwelling house or otherwise as I may choose.



Hawkins Wills Part 16 Page 3 of 3

to this my last Will and Testament.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal This 12th day of August, 1845.

Wm. Phipps (seal)

Witness: Wm. Armstrong, Alfred Armstrong, Mary Armstrong

"Later on, Frederick Ross lost a lot of money," says Mrs. Ellis, "through business losses and investments failures, and prior to the Civil War, he sold the plantation and its slaves to Joshua Phipps, his overseer who had always held a cruel hand over the slaves. Knowing that, Ross freed many of the slaves, who then moved further into Hawkins County, settling at Zion Hill, New Canton, and Rogersville. Among the ones who settled at Rogersville and took the name of their former slave owner, were the ancestors of future singer-actress Diana Ross.

Phipps was a truly evil man, a slave driver, and there are many stories about almost nobody

INSPECTION AND SALE OF A NEGRO.

liking him during his lifetime. "The basement in the Rotherwood Mansion had slave cells," writes Mrs. Ellis. "One large room was windowless with dirt floors, dirt walls and only one opening. This room was for housing 'field slaves,' grouped together at night. The front entrance was a narrow section with a seat hewed out from the dirt wall. Iron bars were set into the opening far window, with no glass."

Mrs. Ellis remembers seeing reminders of Rotherwood's slave past as a little girl, after her parents were hired by the Kingsport Improvement Company to maintain the mansion and grounds.

"As a child," she writes, "I had to go into this area almost every day because the food Mother canned was stored in the basement, and the laundry facility was also in this area. The stench was embedded in the ground--the darkness and dampness was sometimes overpowering. One could imagine hearing the moaning, the wailing, the crying of slaves.. their misery and despair. If a slave was maimed, he was shot like an animal because he was of no more use. In the front room of the 3rd floor facing the river, was the whipping post. Slaves were shackled to the post to be whipped. The blood stains are still embedded into the wood floors of that room. Days of heavy moisture, the blood stains appear!"

In fact, people in Kingsport always spoke of Phipps with dread. Phipps was most notorious for his treatment of his slaves.

Phipps was not along in his rantings. Supposedly, he also had a mistress, who, believe it or

not, was a former slave. It was said, she was even more evil than he, if that were possible.

"AUNT" VICTORIA (VIC) PHIPPS

The cruelness of Joshua Phipps was also recounted by "Aunt Vic Phipps," a black woman owned as a slave by Phipps, whose account of him was told to Edward Stewart in an article published in the Kingsport Times-News in October of 1975 (Aunt Vic was also an early ancestor of the Price Family, who settled in New Canton). In the article, Stewart said "Aunt Vic was a slave at Rotherwood before the Civil War, and told me about hiding in the reeds and culverts when the slave traders would come through, so she wouldn't be sold. Aunt Vic described Richard Netherland as a workmaster for Joshua Phipps, who made the slaves work harder. She said that both Netherland and Phipps were cruel and beat the slaves all the time." But what impressed Stewart the most, was how "Aunt Vic" described how Phipps wanted to be buried. "She said Phipps often expressed a wish to be buried standing up on the hill at Rotherwood, so he could look down into the bottoms and see the slaves working."

"During the Civil War," says Mrs. Ellis, "Phipps established his own kind of cruelty to his own family. His daughter Pricilla waited faithfully for her young lover to return from the war. Her father disapproved of the young farmhand, and had him killed in action! She died from grief at the age of 20, and her ghost is said to still sit at the front window of the mansion."

The Civil War's Battle of Rotherwood lasted about a day, according to Mrs. Ellis. The mansion had escape routes built in during the war, and the dining room fireplace had a secret trap door that opened into a tunnel that led to the river. A person with the enemy on his tail could escape in a boat down the river.

As mean as Joshua Phipps was, fate had a way of dealing its OWN cruel hand. In July of 1861, Phipps became very sick and had to be fanned on his sickbed by a young slave. There, his sickbed became his deathbed. According to legend, as he lay in bed, a swarm of flies gathered and eventually filled his mouth and nostrils. Unable to breathe, Phipps suffocated.

As if his death were not dramatic enough, his funeral turned out to be even more horrifying. A huge crowd turned out for the funeralization, quickly turning it into more of an event than a funeral. As the hearse carrying his body was being pulled by horses up a hill towards the cemetery, it became too heavy for them to budge it. At the same time, the sky began to darken, as if a storm was brewing. It took many more horses to finally move the casket, and as it slowly made its way up the hill, the sky got darker and darker. All of a sudden, a large dog emerged from the coffin and ran down the hill! The onlookers were terrified. Suddenly, a cloud burst and rain poured down on them. The casket was quickly buried, and everybody ran home.

Today, the black dog, also known as the "Hound of Hell" is said to roam the area around the Rotherwood Mansion. On dark and stormy nights, its low, mournful howl can be heard through the area. Meanwhile, two ghosts are said to haunt the Rotherwood Mansion and its grounds. One is that of Joshua Phipps, who is said to remove covers from sleeping people inside, and laughing his evil, sadistic laugh. The other is the ghost of his evil mistress, who legend says, was killed by the slaves who rose up against her, after becoming sick of tortures inflicted by one of their own. To avoid punishment (and possible mutilation of her remains), she is said to be buried in an unmarked grave, somewhere on the grounds of Rotherwood Mansion.

It's said that most people who have heard the legend of Joshua Phipps have always tended to avoid Rotherwood Mansion after dark. Seeing the ghost of Rowena Ross would be un-nerving, but a chance encounter with the spirits of Phipps, his mistress and the "Hound of Hell" would be too much to bear.

The Rotherwood Mansion sat empty for many years after those harrowing experiences, and its checkered slave past. But then, the railroad came to King's Port (the name later shortened to "Kingsport"), and again, Rotherwood played an important role in the development of the town. Mrs. Ellis writes, "Rotherwood was operated like a "surfdom" when land was purchased by Kingsport for (New York banker and railroad backer) John B. Dennis. An enormous farm was established there, with prize Jersey milk counts, prize bulls, riding stables, a village (Whitesburg) for all farm hands, including an elementary school, church, etc, and of course, the main house servants.

Decisions concerning the building of "Kingsport--The Model City" were made during dinner or lunch meetings. Entertaining notables such as George Eastman, railroad executive J. Fred Johnson and other city notables was all done at Rotherwood Mansion.

Rotherwood was bought by the U.S. government in 1940, Mrs. Ellis remembers. "Mr. Dennis and his wife, my mother Inez (my father had passed away in 1937), moved to Asheville, North Carolina."

Colonel Ryan and his family moved into the Rotherwood Mansion. The 2,500 acre farm was still occupied by the government until the end of World War II.

Mrs. Ellis says Rotherwood was for sale, bought, occupied, for sale again, abandoned, and finally sold during the mid or late 80's, to a young doctor who had found her dream home. "She completely renovated the mansion, reconstructed especially the slave quarters in the basement, the 2nd floor bedrooms and the foyer entrance, and she did hire an artist to paint a mural on the walls in the hallway, depicting the History of Rotherwood. The mural extends up the stairway to the foyer on the 2nd floor. I had to give up photographs of me as a child at Rotherwood to be included as part of the living history of the Rotherwood Mansion."

When the Learning Channel did a television story on Rotherwood called "Ghostly Waters" filmed on location, Mrs. Ellis narrated the first part of the story line. She writes, "Rotherwood Mansion still stands majestic with ghosts who are apparently friendly with the present owner, but holding on to many of its secrets that are still untold."

But lest you think, slaves haunt the grounds of the Rotherwood Plantation itself from the accounts of Mrs. Ellis and research from John Norris Brown, consider the nearby Sensabaugh Tunnel under the CSX Railroad, just up Big Elm Road from the Mansion.

It's said to be JUST AS HAUNTED.

The following information has been documented by the Haunt Masters Club, a paranormal research and investigation group working in Northeast Tennessee, Southwest Virginia and Western North Carolina.

Dr. Nancy Hamblen Acuff explains that the original natural tunnel was cut by Sensabaugh Branch and was widened to make a 348' long tunnel that was never intended for driving. An episode of Haunted South TV explains that 16 men died when the Clinchfield Railroad was widening the tunnel (for overhead passage) in the 1920s.

Long ago, slaves from Hawkins County would hide in the natural tunnel and wait for a ferryman to come down the Holston River and signal it was clear to come aboard by waving a lantern.

One slave and mistress to a Hawkins County man escaped with their three children and was waiting in the tunnel when the slaveholder found them. He smashed one baby against the wall, killing it, then shot the two other children and his mistress.

The youngest baby is allegedly the mournful crier of this tunnel.

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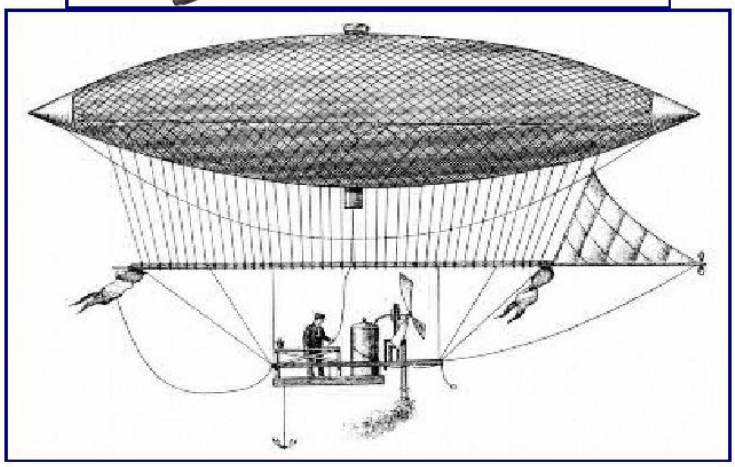

The hot air balloon duel of 1808

By Peashooter85
http://peashooter85.tumblr.com/post/45152126309/the-hot-air-balloon-duel-of-1808-in-1808-two

In 1808 two Parisian men named Monsieur Granpree and Monsieur LePique fell into a dispute over the love of Madamoselle Tirvete, a famous French Opera dancer. Like many men at the time the two decided to settle the question once and for all by personal combat; a duel. So how did they conduct their duel? Pistols at dawn, twenty paces, or perhaps swords? No, Granpree and LePique would fight one of the oddest duels in the history of gentlemanly combat.

Both Granpree and LePique believed themselves to be more intelligent than most others, "men of elevated minds" as they called each other. To show how much more elevated they were than the rest of Paris, they chose to duel in hot air balloons, a French invention first flown in 1783. On the 9th of May, 1808, the two men boarded their own separate hot air balloons with their seconds, and were untethered for flight. When the two were approximately 2,000 feet in the air and 80 yards apart, they produced flintlock blunderbusses (an early type of shotgun) and began firing on each other. LePique fired first and missed. Granpree returned fire immediately, scoring a direct hit on his adversary's balloon, causing it to plummet to the ground, killing LaPique and his second instantly.

by Mark Chorvinsky

Fisheries officer Ragnar Björks, 73, was out checking fishing permits on Sweden's Lake Storsjön when he had the fright of his life. From the placid waters a huge tail suddenly broke the surface near Björk's 12 foot row boat. The colossal creature attached to the tail appeared to be 18 feet long, grey-brown on top with a yellow underbelly. When Björks was alongside the monster, he struck at it with his oar, hitting it on the back. Angered, the creature slapped the water with its tail and the rowboat was thrown nine to twelve feet into the air. "At first I didn't believe that there was any monster in the Storsjön...but now I am convinced."

Does Nessie have a relative in Lake Storsjön in the mountains of Northern Sweden? A large unknown creature has been seen in the lake for over 350 years. Since 1987 the Society for Investigating the Great Lake has collected some 400 reports of "Storsjöodjuret," as the Swedes call the monster.

There is no clear picture of the beastie. Some witnesses describe a large neck undulating back and forth that looks like a horse's mane; others observed a large wormlike creature with recognizable ears. Reports of the creature's size range from 10 to 42 feet in length.

Like the Loch Ness Monster, one of the numerous theories is that during the Ice Age 15,000 years ago, the monster may have become trapped in the Swedish Lake.

Loch Ness and Lake Storsjön are not isolated cases of lakes that are believed to harbor monsters. In Europe there are also reports of such creatures from Ireland, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Norway, Wales, and elsewhere. In fact, there are over 250 lakes around the world which are believed to be inhabited by monsters.

There is a common pattern in the lake monster puzzle: the animals all are found in lake and river systems that are either connected to the sea or have been in the past, and these systems all either harbor or once harbored migratory fish. In many cases, the lakes are deep and cold.

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-- April Fool's Day, 1998

Burger King published a full page advertisement in *USA Today* announcing the introduction of a new item to their menu: a "Left-Handed Whopper" specially designed for the 32 million left-handed Americans. According to the advertisement, the new whopper included the same ingredients as the original Whopper (lettuce, tomato, hamburger patty, etc.). However, the left-handed whopper had "all condiments rotated 180 degrees, thereby redistributing the weight of the sandwich so that the bulk of the condiments will skew to the left, thereby reducing the amount of lettuce and other toppings from spilling out the right side of the burger."

Jim Watkins, senior vice president for marketing at Burger King, was quoted as saying that the new sandwich was the "ultimate 'HAVE IT YOUR WAY' for our left-handed customers." The advertisement then noted that the left-handed Whopper would initially only be available in the United States, but that the company was "considering plans to roll it out to other countries with large left-handed populations." The following day Burger King issued a follow-up release revealing that although the Left-Handed Whopper was a hoax, thousands of customers had gone into restaurants to request the new sandwich. Simultaneously, according to the press release, "many others requested their own 'right handed' version."

Note from Curator: I've tried repeatedly to obtain a copy of the actual "left-handed whopper" ad that ran in *USA Today* back in 1998, but I've had no success. I've contacted both Burger King and their PR firm, but have never received a response. Nor have I been able to track down a copy of the April 1, 1998 edition of *USA Today*. The paper's online archive contains the text of its articles, but none of the ads. So if anyone reading this happens to have a copy of the ad, I'd love to get a scan of it that I could post here.

Left-Handed Whopper Haiku (submitted by Hoax Museum readers)

Burger King retracts
And makes a startling new claim:
Whopper is ambidextrous!

(by Paul)

Turning and turning
toward a widening mouth, a
left-handed whopper!
(by Alex)

Left handed whopper
A normal one just turned round
Fools America
(by J)

April Fool Categories: Food and Drink, Corporations, United States, 1998, Fictitious Products, Left-Handed Products.

Comments

I could have saved them a lot of money!
All they had to do mas make an ambidextrous whopper. That way they would only have to rotate the condiments 90 degrees not 180 degrees. This would save a lot of time!!! };~)
Posted by Rick Lines in Wilkes Barre, Pa., USA on Sun Mar 28, 2004 at 10:22 PM

LOL, great thinking Rick!

The Left-Handed Whopper is a great joke too. Reminds me of the Ren Faire I used to go to in Mass, there was a store that sold (every year) Right handed mugs and Left handed mugs, right-handed on the right side of the store and left-handed on the left. Until I actually stopped and looked at the things (to see that it was simply which way the cup handle was pointed) I totally thought that was a cute idea.
Posted by Jennifer on Thu Apr 01, 2004 at 12:39 PM

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omg this is the funnest think ive heard
tis great
im lovin it
Posted by derek in john town on Thu Apr 01, 2004 at 02:34 PM

---

derek wrote "im lovin it", possibly without realizing that it's the current slogan of BK's biggest competitor, McD's. Now *that's* funny!
Posted by Bob on Sun May 09, 2004 at 04:15 AM

What I find funniest is that of everything I'm reading on this site, this is the one (so far) that I think I remember seeing.

I believe I was sitting in an airport, killing time reading the paper, and thinking to myself, "What in the world kind of nonsense is this," not realizing it was 1 April.
Posted by Bryan in Leavenworth, Kansas on Tue Apr 05, 2005 at 04:17 PM

The left handed burgers taste better too!
Posted by Kae Web on Sat Mar 25, 2006 at 07:10 PM

I really have to ask if anyone who fell for that was asking themselves "does it really matter?" Round, square, triangle, whatever... Perhaps it only applied to asymetrical burgers.
Posted by bob on Sun Apr 02, 2006 at 07:56 AM

This was run in Kenya a number of years ago, was really funny especially with pictures at the front page of the paper.
Posted by Steve Thuo in Canada on Mon Apr 03, 2006 at 11:29 AM

Well Jennifer, I hate to be the one to inform you of this, but there actually are such things as right-handed and left handed mugs, and pens. Things righties don't notice, but be being a left I do end up noticing, most of the time it is simply do to if you can recieve all the perks of the product by using your left hand, things such as images drawn on the inside side of the mug that you cann't see when drinking with your left hand, or words written on pens which are

upside down to left-handed writers, and drink holders on the wrong side. Ohh yes it is a true bias, but I do also find this left-handed burger idea brilliant.
Posted by Megan in Canada on Wed Nov 15, 2006 at 05:15 PM

But it doesn't matter, because it takes two hands to handle a whopper!
I guess no one remembers that slogan.
Posted by Mike on Thu Mar 29, 2007 at 09:47 PM

LMAO I remember my dad actually telling me about this back when I was a little kid. Proud to be a lefty!

orders one
Posted by Jon in Orange County, CA on Tue Apr 01, 2008 at 03:37 AM

Only in America. Are they putting stupidity genes in the food over there or something?!?
Posted by Jacob in UK on Tue Apr 01, 2008 at 01:16 PM

You are right Jacob, only in America. BTW, do you know where I can get a spaghetti tree?
Posted by Joe in US on Tue Apr 01, 2008 at 02:39 PM

Hehe! I'm left handed and I would be very confused with a left handed whopper. I'm 10 so I would be very curious and confused. LOL! Great joke Buger King!
P.S. *whispers to Burger King* I love you! :D
Posted by Tamera in a Place in space on Tue Apr 01, 2008 at 11:36 PM

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The Legend of Pan's Statue

In Cherokee Park in Louisville, the centerpiece of the Hogan Fountain Pavilion is Enid Yandell's statue of the Greek God Pan that stands on top of the fountain. Yandell's bronze sculpture depicts Pan in full Edwardian nursery room fantasy guise, with the body of a young boy and a cherubic face, even his goat's legs and horns seem warm and cuddly as he plays among the four turtles spitting water down into the fountain's cistern. Perhaps because Yandell carved him with such playfulness that the legend began that Pan likes to play, and that on moonless nights he climbs down from the top of the fountain and causes mischief throughout the park.

The statue was dedicated in 1905, built at the request of a Mr. W.J. Hogan of Anchorage, Kentucky. Mr. Hogan was apparently something of an animal lover, as his initial request was for a fountain that dogs and horses could drink from in the park. He also offered to contribute a healthy sum to the fountain's construction.

In an excess of civic zeal now sadly lost in this country, the animal watering hole became the elaborate fountain that now stands at the center of Cherokee park. The late 19th Century was a time of unparalleled excellence in American figurative sculpture, and the artist selected for the work was a Louisville native and a member of a prominent group of female sculptors informally known as the white rabbits. Yandell had already completed the statue of Daniel Boone that also now stands in Cherokee park, and the city was happy to bring this local girl made good home for the new statue.

Perhaps Yandell accidentally gave some wandering spirit a home when she carved and cast the Cherokee Park Pan. Ever since the statue was placed on its pedestal, small bits of mischief have been blamed on Pan. Things like tipped over trash cans, broken water fountains, minor damage to park property, damage to cars, footprints through flowerbeds at night, all of these things and more are attributed to the mischievous statue. The story goes that on moonless night, Pan climbs down from the fountain and runs around the park making a nuisance of himself.

Whether or not you happen to catch him running around, the statue of Pan, and indeed all of Cherokee park is well wort a visit. But if you plan to park overnight near the park and it's a new moon, you may want to throw a few coins in the fountain and ask Pan not to scratch the paint.

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Nestled in the foothills of the ancient Texas Hill Country, San Antonio sits and looks every bit the part of a modern American city. Glass skyscrapers and the Tower of the Americas kiss the azure Texas sky, while below the hustle and bustle of city life continues unabated. In San Antonio, however, the old is never too far from the new and history is everywhere. Night is the time when the weight of it seems the most oppressive. You can just feel that important things happened here and on nights when the moon is small, or absent all together, you can almost imagine seeing the ghosts yourself.

It is this eerie aspect of the River City that has given birth to a myriad of legends. La Llorona, brujas, thunderbirds, werewolves and ghostly specters all inhabit prominent places in the folklore of San Antonio. It is a lesser-known tale that I wish to examine today. It is a tale that is part ghost story and part cryptozoological puzzle; it is the legend of the “Donkey Lady Bridge.”

The "Donkey Lady Bridge" crosses Elm Creek near Loop 1604 South of San Antonio.

Don’t let the somewhat silly-sounding name fool you. The “Donkey Lady” has been a source of terror for residents of south San Antonio for generations. As with most legends, there are various versions of the story; all attempting to explain the origin of the “Donkey Lady.” Though they all vary slightly, the tales have enough in common to make it seem plausible that there is a seed of truth in them. I will recount the version of the legend I heard years ago as a young boy.

Years ago, most agree sometime in the mid 1800’s, a settler woman lived near the banks of Elm Creek with her husband and two children. The couple was barely scratching out a living from farming the stingy South Texas soil and raising a few head of livestock. One day, the son of a wealthy San Antonio merchant came riding onto or near their property. Somehow, the young man came into contact with a horse or mule belonging to the pioneer family. The young man, the story goes, teased the animal and hit it with a stick. The poor animal retaliated in the only way it knew how and bit the merchant’s son. Enraged, the young man began to beat the animal even more severely than before. The poor creature’s cries reached the ears of the pioneer couple and they quickly rushed to the scene. It became obvious to the couple that their animal, no doubt vital to their livelihood, was about to be beaten to death. The couple began throwing rocks at their animal’s assailant and pelted him several times. They did not realize this young man was the son of an important man in town. The young man hurled a string of expletives at the couple as he retreated but swore he would get even with them.

"Donkey Lady Bridge" sits in a surprisingly remote and lonely location considering San Antonio is the 7th most populous city in the U.S.

That night, a party of men, led by the wealthy merchant and his son, stealthily approached the young family's cabin and set fire to it with torches. The heavily armed men refused to allow anyone inside the cabin to leave. Desperate, the man of the house attempted to make a break for it in the hopes that his wife and children could escape while he distracted their attackers. Alas, he was gunned down almost immediately upon setting foot outside the cabin. The screams of the woman and her children as they burned alive were heard up and down the creek for over a mile.

Just as the mob was sure that their unholy task was complete, a figure, engulfed in flames, smashed through what was left of one of the cabin windows and staggered toward the stunned and now terrified men. The woman's hands seemed to have been burned down to mere nubs and her face appeared to have melted or sagged to the point that it was unnaturally long and deformed. The poor creature's clothes were gone, burned away, revealing skin charred completely black yet, somehow, still on fire. The wretched creature that had once been a happy, sod-busting wife and mother let out a bone-chilling wail and then staggered past the men and hurled herself off the bank and into the waters of Elm Creek. The criminal mob followed to the point from which she had launched herself into the black water but saw no trace of her. Her body, it is said, was never found.

"Donkey Lady Bridge" takes on an ominous air once night falls.

Since that terrible night, travelers who tarry too long on or near the bridge have occasionally reported terrifying run-ins with the "Donkey Lady." Horrible screeching and screaming is reported from time to time emanating from under the bridge or the surrounding woods. Some have claimed a malevolent creature of some kind has dropped onto the hood or roof of their vehicle, screamed loudly and scratched and clawed at the windows in an attempt to get at them. Photos exist of damage allegedly done to vehicles by the "Donkey Lady." It is said that if you park on the bridge, shut off your headlights and wait, you will almost certainly encounter something truly terrifying.

I have absolutely no idea how much, if any, of the above tale is true. I've become familiar with other versions in the years since I heard this account. Whether they contain more or less truth than the version I grew up with is something I just can't say. I do tend to believe that there is some germ of truth in the "Donkey Lady" legends. The tale has endured far too long for that not to be the case, in my opinion.

What interests me more than whether or not the stories are true is what people are still seeing on or near the Elm Creek Bridge. Could there be a flesh and blood creature responsible for the legends? If so, what could it be? Many have screwed up their courage and ventured under the bridge to examine the muddy bank for clues. Some have come back with photos of hoof-like tracks. Is this proof that the "Donkey Lady" exists? I would hesitate to say that. This is Texas, after all, and finding the tracks of a horse or mule anywhere in this state, even under the "Donkey Lady Bridge," would not be all that unusual; however, whatever haunts this bridge and the surrounding woods is still seen on occasion and is heard more often than that to this very day. If anyone out there reading this post has had any experiences at the "Donkey Lady Bridge," I'd love to hear about them.

Could there be a flesh and blood creature roaming Elm Creek that is responsible for the "Donkey Lady" legend?

I'll, no doubt, receive criticism from some for this post. To some degree this is understandable, as the tale of the "Donkey Lady" of Elm Creek seems more of a ghost story than anything else. Still, ghosts typically don't dent hoods or leave hoof-like tracks in the mud of creek banks. Maybe there is a biological explanation for the legends. If so, then the story of the San Antonio "Donkey Lady" definitely belongs here. In addition, I've inadvertently become something of an amateur folklorist while doing research on historical sightings of wild men, black panthers and river monsters. I've run across all kinds of interesting stuff and I have a hard time not sharing a great story.

Whatever you believe the truth behind the "Donkey Lady" legend, you must admit…

… it's a heck of a good story.

* To visit the "Donkey Lady Bridge" in San Antonio, Texas, start at the intersection of Jett Road and Loop 1604 south of San Antonio. Go 1.9 miles north on Jett Road. The bridge is on the left (north) side of the road. It used to be the intersection of the Old Applewhite and Jett Roads. It is now the Old Applewhite Bridge Trailhead.

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The Leonardo hidden from Hitler in case it gave him magic powers

29 October 2014 bbc.com

Last updated at 20:29 ET

Leonardo da Vinci Self-Portrait

One of the world's most famous self-portraits is going on rare public display in the northern Italian city of Turin. Very little is known about the 500-year-old, fragile, fading red chalk drawing of Leonardo da Vinci but some believe it has mystical powers.

There is a myth in Turin that the gaze of Leonardo da Vinci in this self-portrait is so intense that those who observe it are imbued with great strength.

Some say it was this magical power, not the cultural and economic value of the drawing, that led to it being secretly moved from Turin and taken to Rome during World War Two - heaven forbid it should ever fall into Hitler's hands and give him more power.

Whatever the reason, this was the only work from the entire collection of precious drawings and manuscripts to be removed from the Royal Library in Turin at the time.

The library's current director, Giovanni Saccani, says nobody even knows exactly where it was hidden. "To prevent the Nazis from taking it, an intelligence operation saw it transported in absolute anonymity to Rome."

Under such difficult circumstances, preservation was not properly considered, "nor did they have the same knowledge and techniques back then," says Saccani. "Naturally, this did not do its condition any good."

Inside the Royal Library a pristine red carpet lines the stairs - we follow the steps down to a secure underground vault with reinforced doors.

This purpose built caveau has been the home of Leonard's Self-Portrait, and thousands of other priceless drawings and manuscripts, since 1998. The picture's treatment today could not contrast more strikingly with the neglect it suffered during the first half of the 20th Century.

The lighting is exclusively fibre optic - no natural light can enter this room - and the temperature is kept at a constant 20 degrees Celsius, the

Biblioteca Reale

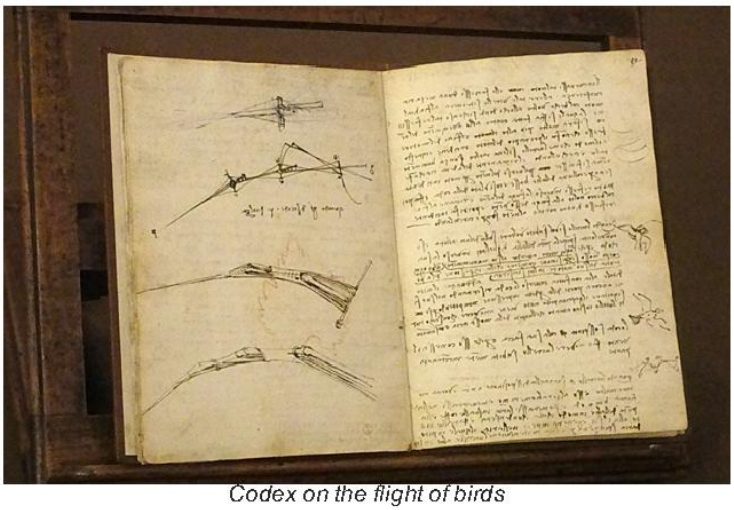
humidity at 55 per cent. The display cases are made of a type of glass which Saccani describes as "anti-everything", and the whole area is fitted with alarms and security cameras.

Using a special preservation torch, Saccani shines some light onto the drawing's surface to demonstrate the extent of the damage known as foxing, when small reddish-brown spots or marks appear on ancient paper.

"This case is particularly bad," he sighs - 200 years ago the foxing was less obvious. "On the bottom left of the drawing there was a red chalk inscription in Latin which said Leonardus Vincius, which has now completely disappeared."

Since the damage is so extensive and the paper so fragile, restoration would be extremely complex. Exhaustive analysis and discussion by world experts in restoration has led to "the decision to maintain the status quo," says Saccani.

And since coming to the caveau in 1998, the condition of the drawing has not deteriorated any further.



Codex on the flight of birds

Leonardo's Codex on the Flight of Birds is also on display at the exhibition

"This comforts us because we know we are getting it right now. You have to remember it's a good 500 years old. The pictures we drew at school probably don't exist anymore and this was a drawing done on ordinary paper, so I think it's pretty extraordinary that we can still display such a masterpiece today."

Equally extraordinary is the story of how this self-portrait ended up in Turin. It was part of a vast collection purchased in 1839 by King Carlo Alberto of Savoy. A passionate collector, he bought it from Giovanni Volpato, an art dealer and curator who had travelled extensively throughout Europe. How he came upon Leonardo's drawings is a mystery but it is known that he asked the king for the sum of 70,000 Piedmontese lire for the collection.

"A doctor earned 1,000 lire a year at the time so it was an astronomical figure," smiles Saccani. "The king managed to get him down to 50,000 but it still took him eight years to pay for it in instalments."

But Saccani says Volpato was not the ruthless businessman he might sound.

"Volpato's aim wasn't simply financial because, in exchange for agreeing to give the king a discount, he asked to be allowed to become the unpaid curator of drawings in the Royal

Library."

And since then Turin has remained the home of the red chalk Self-Portrait.

line

Is it really a self-portrait?

People looking at the self-portrait

Generally dated around 1515, some experts believe the picture corresponds more with Leonardo's style in the 1490s, yet the subject of the drawing is an old man.

"He wasn't terribly keen on the idea of self-portraiture full stop," says James Hall, author of The Self-Portrait: a Cultural History - he doesn't believe the portrait was drawn by Leonardo. "He didn't much like the idea that the art work should be a portrayal of the artist. He wanted the art work to represent an ideal."

Hall thinks this drawing has become famous at least partly because of the sheer lack of self-portraits by Leonardo. "People have latched onto this like the philosopher's stone and clung to it."

But others are less sceptical. "I'm quite happy to believe it is a self-portrait but I think it's for each person to decide when they see the real object," says Liz Rideal, the author of two books on self-portraits and a lecturer at the National Portrait Gallery in London and Slade School of Fine Art.

She says most people want to believe it is a genuine Leonardo "because he has this superman status… I think we are in awe of genius and therefore, if this is the self-portrait of a genius, then we want to see what he looked like."

As director of the Royal Library, Giovanni Saccani is in no doubt: "It is a self-portrait… anyone who finds themselves standing in front of this drawing is struck dumb. The first thing they say when they recover is 'this is giving me the shivers'. The expressive power of this face is absolutely connected to an emotion and an ability that only Leonardo could possess."

line

Leonardo's Self-Portrait is considered so valuable that it is subject to a state decree of immovability.

It can only be moved with ministerial permission. In 2011 it was taken to the Reggia di Venaria Reale just outside Turin for an exhibition marking the 150th anniversary of the unification of Italy.

"Transportation involved a special 'clima box' able to maintain the same air conditioning

systems present here in the caveau," says Saccani. "This 'clima box' was then put inside a case, which was in turn placed in an outer casing, all of which was able to avoid vibration." The package was then driven with an armed escort and constantly monitored using remote technology.

An extraordinarily complex, delicate and expensive undertaking, unlikely to be repeated very often in the future.

Portrait of a girl

Leonardo's Portrait of a Girl is on display as part of the King's Treasures exhibition

Over the coming weeks, 50 people will be allowed into the Royal Library's caveau every hour from 09:00 to 18:00 to see the self-portrait - the temperature of the vault has been lowered slightly to compensate for the body heat that people will give off.

Although there are more than 80 masterpieces on display in the King's Treasures exhibition - including further works by Leonardo, Raphael, Rembrandt, Perugino and Van Dyck - for most visitors, the highlight will be the rare chance to behold the face of the great Renaissance polymath.

And they might also bear one final myth in mind - it is said that just before taking an exam, students would do their last-minute revision in the Royal Library above the vault. Legend has it that studying near Leonardo's genius can somehow rub off.

The Royal Library

Photographs courtesy of the Regional Management for the cultural and landscape heritage of Piedmont

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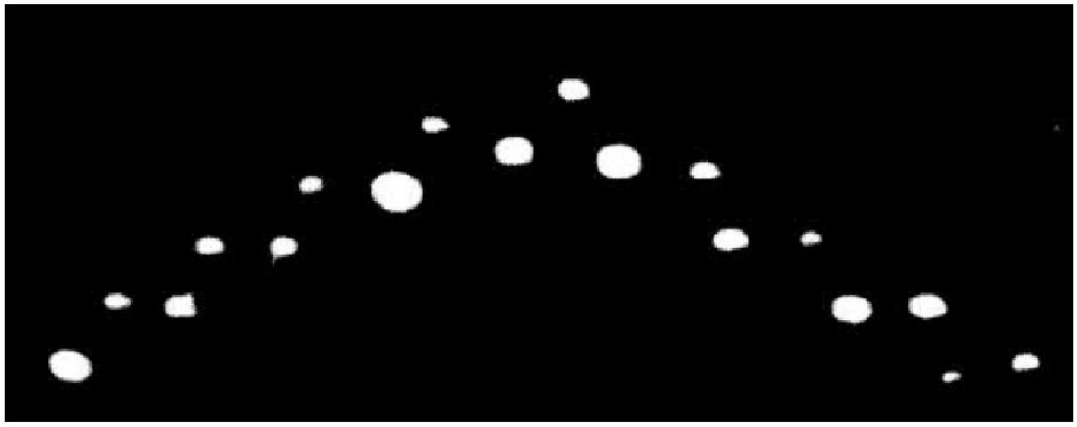
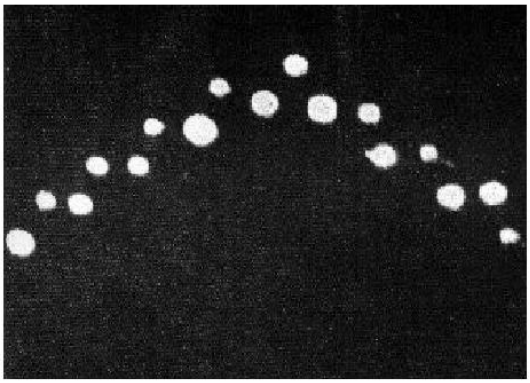
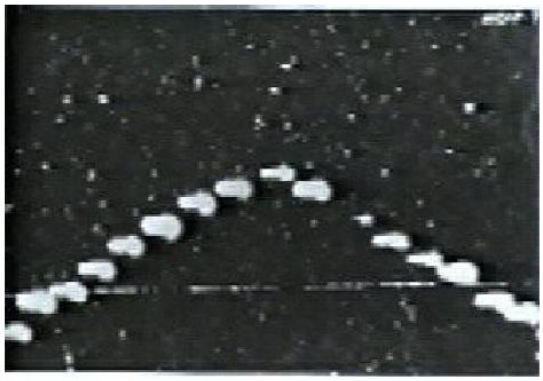
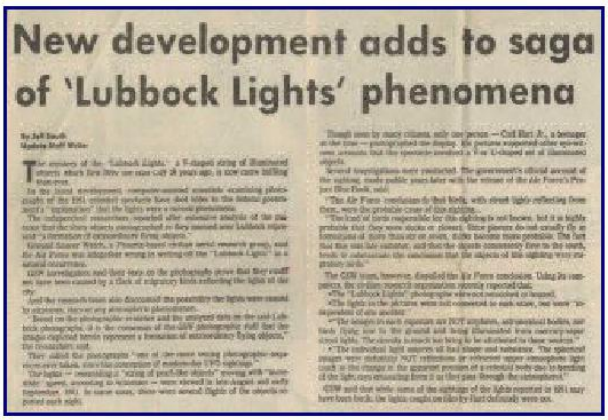








New development adds to saga of 'Lubbock Lights' phenomena

By Jeff Smith
Madeira Staff Writer

The mystery of the "Lubbock Lights," a V-shaped string of illuminated objects which first flew on nine-city 28 years ago, is now more baffling than ever.

In the latest development, computer-assisted scientists examining photographs of the 1951 episodes produce have shot holes in the federal government's "explanation" that the lights were a mirage phenomena.

The independent researchers reported after extensive analysis of the pictures that the story objects photographed in flare named over Lubbock represent "a formation of extraordinary flying objects."

Edward Sawyer Welch, a Phoenix-based civilian aerial research group, said the Air Force was adaptable wrong in writing off the "Lubbock Lights" as a natural occurrence.

[illegible] investigators said their tests on the photographs prove that they could not have been caused by a flock of migratory birds reflecting the lights of the city.

And the research team also discounted the possibility the lights were caused by mirrorism, the very atmospheric phenomenon.

"Based on the photographic evidence and the unsigned data on the 1951 Lubbock photographs, it is the consensus of the GIW photographic staff that the images captured herein represent a formation of extraordinary flying objects," the researchers said.

They added the photographs "one of the more vexing photographic experiences we taken, since the conception of modern-day UFO sightings."

The lights — resembling a "string of pearl-like objects" moving with "incredible" speed, according to witnesses — were viewed in late August and early September, 1951. In some cases, there were several flights of the objects reported each night.

Though seen by many citizens, only one person — Carl Hart Jr., a teenager at the time — photographed the display. His pictures supported other spectators' accounts that the spectacle involved a V or U-shaped set of illuminated objects.

Several investigations were conducted. The government's official account of the sighting made public years later with the release of the Air Force's Project Blue Book, said:

"The Air Force conclusion is that birds, with street lights reflecting from them, were the probable cause of this sighting.

"The kind of birds responsible for the sightings is not known, but it is highly probable that they were stocks or plovers. Since plovers do not usually fly in formations of more than six or seven, stocks become more probable. The fact that this was late summer, and that the objects commonly flew to the south, tends to substantiate the conclusion that the objects of this sighting were migratory birds."

The GIW team, however, disputed the Air Force conclusion. Using its computers, the civilian research organization recently reported that:

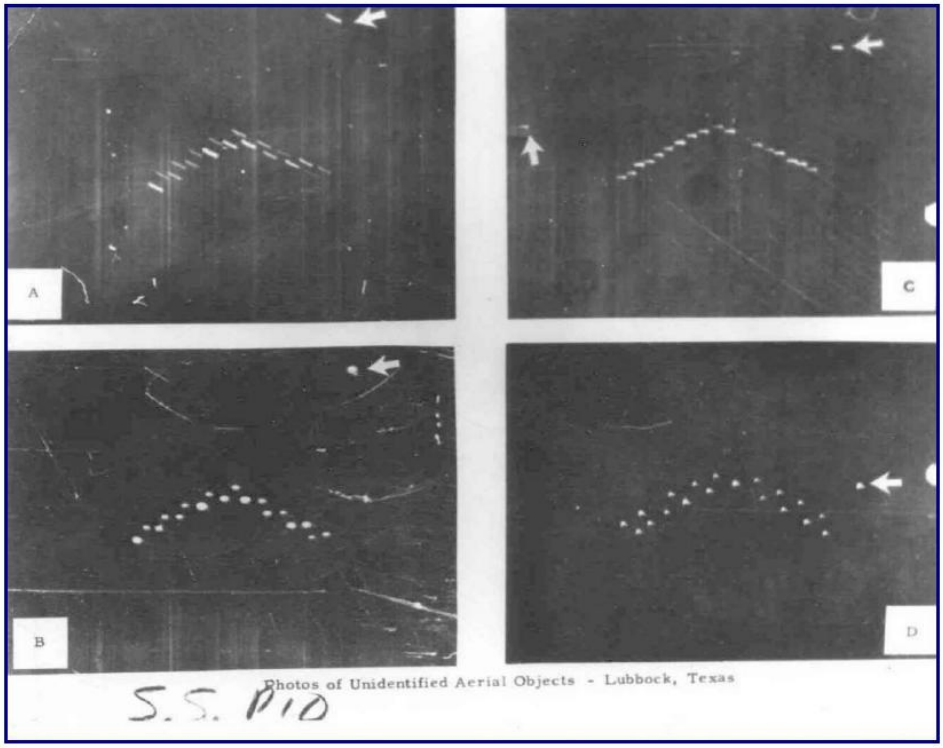
•The "Lubbock Lights" photographs were not retouched or tampered.

•The lights in the pictures were not connected to each other, but were "independent of one another."

•"The images in each exposure are NOT airplanes, astronomical bodies, nor birds flying low to the ground and being illuminated from contrary-super street lights. The circuits in each set being to be attributed to these sources."

•"The individual light sources all had shape and substance. The spherical images were definitely NOT reflections or refracted upper atmospheric light (such as the change in the apparent position of a celestial body due to bending of the light rays emanating from it as they pass through the atmosphere)."

GIW said that while some of the sightings of the lights reported in 1951 may have been birds, the lights caught on film by Hart definitely were not.

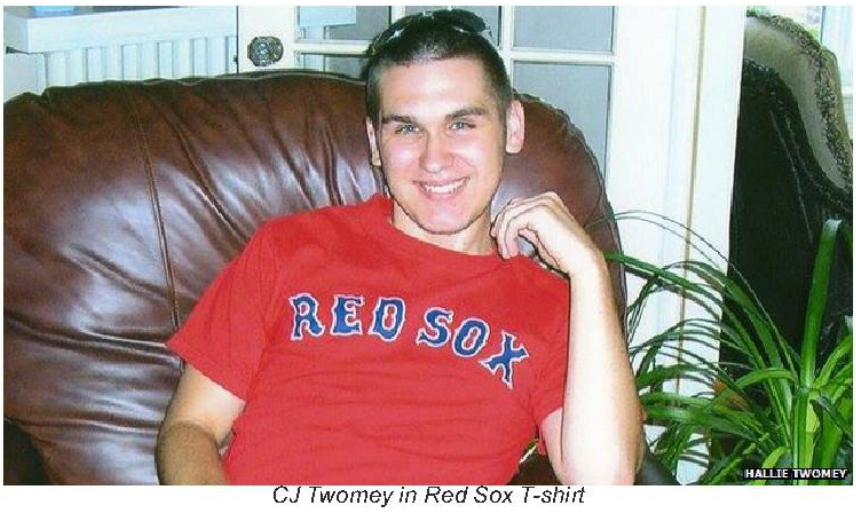


Photos of Unidentified Aerial Objects - Lubbock, Texas

S.S. PID

The man whose ashes are scattered in more than 100 countries

30November2014 bbc.com



CJ Twomey in Red Sox T-shirt

In November 2013, Hallie Twomey turned to social media to ask people across the world to scatter her son's ashes. One year on CJ's ashes have been taken to more than 100 countries and have even been sent into space.

Of the many photographs you can see on the Scattering CJ Facebook page, one appears more often than any other. It is a picture of a young man, smiling into the camera, sunglasses resting on his head and wearing a Boston Red Sox T-shirt.

He is CJ Twomey from Maine in the United States - a former member of the US air force who loved to travel and loved adventure. On 14 April 2010, when he was 20 years old, CJ took his own life.

Last November, as his mother was looking at the urn filled with her son's ashes sitting on the mantelpiece, she decided that she wanted to send him on a journey.

"It dawned on me that his ashes would be sitting in that urn forever," says Hallie Twomey. "He didn't get to see the world and I wanted to give CJ something he didn't get a chance to have."

After discussing it with her husband John, Hallie set up a Facebook page asking if anyone would be willing to scatter a small amount of CJ's ashes in a place of their choosing.

CJ's ashes have been scattered in Machu Picchu, Peru...

... and on a tea plantation in Tamil Nadu, India

At the beginning, the offers were slow to come in - Hallie and her family thought they would be lucky to get a few hundred people making contact.

But one year on, more than 9,000 people have offered to take some of her son's ashes on their travels and Hallie now has to be

A woman scattering CJ's ashes over Machu Picchu, Peru

Scattering CJ's ashes at a tea plantation in Tamil Nadu, India

selective.

Find out more

Hallie Twomey spoke to Weekend on the BBC World Service

She chooses people going to places that are particularly unique or where CJ's remains haven't yet been. "I wish we could involve every person that offers but we only have a finite amount of ash," says Hallie.

When someone makes contact and the offer is accepted, Hallie places a small amount of CJ's ashes into a little bag and posts it along with a letter and the photo of CJ in his Red Sox shirt.

"I ask them to let CJ know that we loved him," says Hallie. "And the thing I need people to do most for me is to tell CJ I'm sorry. Because I am - I feel I let my son down."

CJ's ashes have been skydiving several times, including on this occasion in Arizona

Scattering the ashes on sand dunes near Swakopmund in Namibia...

... and from a hot air balloon over Cappadocia, Turkey

Scattering CJ's ashes during a skydive over Eloy, Arizona

CJ's ashes scattered in Sand dunes near Swakopmund in Namibia

CJ's ashes being scattered from a hot air balloon over Cappadocia, Turkey

Those who scatter CJ's ashes are asked to take a picture and send back a few words about their chosen location. The Scattering CJ Facebook page is filled with photographs from around the world - famous landmarks, snowy mountains and tropical islands all make an appearance.

Most of the photographs include the little bag of ashes and CJ's picture in the foreground - many show a small amount of ash held in someone's outstretched hand, ready to be scattered.

The page also shows an impressive list of destinations where CJ's ashes have been scattered - ranging from Alabama to Afghanistan and Cambodia to Cape Verde.

On the Zugspitze, the highest mountain in Germany...
... and 16m below the sea surface near the Dominican Republic

Despite so many packets being sent to so many destinations, there have been relatively few issues in getting CJ's ashes to those who wish to scatter them.

But a few envelopes have arrived at their destination damaged - some with the ashes missing. "That can be hard to hear but we decided to believe that wherever CJ's ashes ended up, that's where they were meant to be," says Hallie.

Sending cremated remains by post

- Postal systems around the world have different rules about sending cremated human

CJ's ashes and his photograph on the Zugspitze, the highest mountain in Germany

A diver with a photograph of CJ below the sea surface near the Dominican Republic

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US Postal Service post boxes

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remains by post

- The US Postal Service (USPS) allows the shipment of cremated remains both domestically and internationally
- The Royal Mail in the UK considers human remains, including ashes, a "prohibited item" and will not transport them
- If posting ashes internationally, the USPS advises to check whether the destination country permits it or if certain procedures apply

(Source: USPS / Royal Mail)

Occasionally some of CJ's ashes are returned - perhaps people have changed their minds or their travel plans have fallen through. It's something they are asked to do if they feel they can't fulfil their offer.

But it can be difficult for Hallie to receive those packets in the post. "I'm not sure why that makes me feel sad when it has always been an option," writes Hallie on Facebook.

The people who have offered to scatter CJ's ashes are from different backgrounds, age groups and nationalities. Some of them have had their lives affected by suicide or perhaps contemplated it themselves.

"Because of CJ and his journey, some people have shared with us that they no longer want to end their life," says Hallie. "We never for even one moment imagined that our son's story could save others."

Port Willunga Beach in South Australia

Overlooking Haikou City on Hainan Island in China

One of the US Winter Olympic team offered to scatter CJ at the Winter Olympic Games in

Port Willunga Beach in South Australia

CJ's ashes being scattered on Hainan Island in China

One of the US Winter Olympic team scattering CJ in Sochi

Sochi

Although his ashes have been scattered across seven continents including Antarctica, there are still a few locations his family would love CJ to get to - the Christ the Redeemer statue in Rio de Janeiro, the Galapagos Islands, the Great Pyramid of Giza in Egypt and under the ancient Angel Oak Tree in South Carolina.

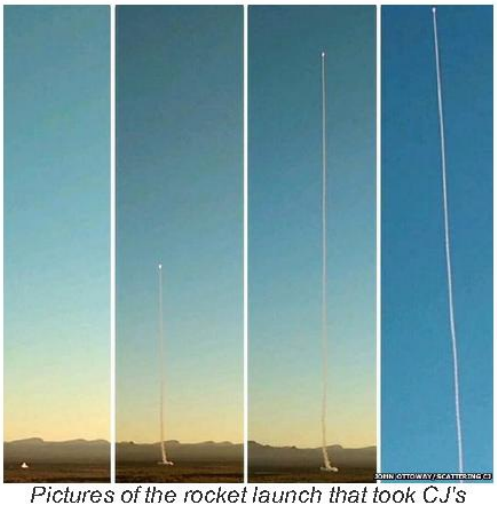
CJ's journey hasn't only been confined to Earth - his ashes were part of a rocket's payload launched from the New Mexican desert in October. "It allowed our larger than life son to reach farther than we ever imagined," says Hallie.

CJ's family don't intend to send all of his ashes away - a small amount will remain at home and some have already been incorporated into jewellery for Hallie to wear. They have never measured the exact amount of ash in CJ's urn but about two thirds of what they planned to share has now been sent.

Their aim is to post the remaining third by early 2015 but there is no definite timeline. "I trust that I will know when it is time to be finished," says Hallie.

Hallie Twomey and her son CJ

Hallie doesn't know how she will feel when the Scattering CJ project draws to a close and she sends off the last packet of CJ's ashes - but she is sure she will cry. "Mailing your child's



Pictures of the rocket launch that took CJ's ashes into space

ashes anywhere will never feel right because it's totally wrong that he's gone," she says, but she's glad she did it.

"As his Mum, my single biggest fear is that CJ will be forgotten," says Hallie. And with more than 18,000 people now following the Scattering CJ Facebook page and new offers to scatter his ashes still arriving each day, she hopes that sending CJ on this journey will keep his memory alive.

Hallie Twomey and her son CJ

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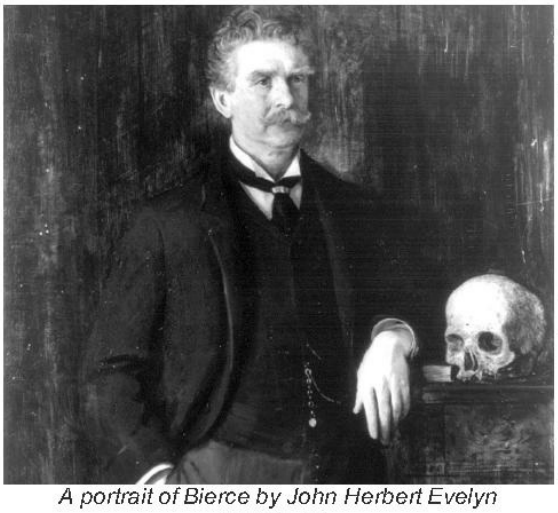
The many deaths of Ambrose Bierce.



A portrait of Bierce by John Herbert Evelyn Partington.

Ambrose Bierce's old house in St. Helena, California, surrounded by the vineyards of Napa Valley, is in good repair. Eight stout sequoia trunks flare outward from a fused base in the front yard. An hour and a half drive to the south, in San Francisco, is a short knife-thrust of an alley in North Beach named Ambrose Bierce. It runs behind the old *San Francisco Examiner* building, where Bierce worked as a columnist for the young William Randolph Hearst.

This year marks the centennial of the presumed death of Bierce, Civil War soldier, journalist, and author of *The Devil's Dictionary*, a wickedly witty book of social commentary disguised as definitions. He's still best known for his fiction: his fastidiously plotted horror tales and the dark, vivid stories—including the often anthologized "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge"—that drew from his early war experiences at Chickamauga, Shiloh, and Kennesaw Mountain, where he was wounded. In 1913, at the age of seventy-one, the famous writer saddled up a horse and rode into Mexico, not speaking any Spanish, in order to cover the Mexican Revolutionary War, perhaps to participate in it, perhaps to interview Pancho Villa. As newspaper accounts of his time reported, he disappeared without a trace.

More accurately, there were too many traces to follow and World War I soon broke out, so a thorough search for Bierce was postponed. In his disappearing act—and some thought it was an act meant to cloak his suicide or his removal to a sanitorium—Bierce becomes a bit like one of the ghostly characters in Mexico's most celebrated novel, *Pedro Paramo*, which is narrated by a man who doesn't realize he's dead. Or like the protagonist in Bierce's own story "An Inhabitant of Carcosa," who stumbles across his own tombstone. According to witnesses, Bierce died over and over again, all over Mexico. There is even a cenotaph for him in the sleepy mining town of Sierra Mojada, in the Chihuahua Desert. Curiously, although his body doesn't lie under it, it is the most distinguished marker for any of Bierce's immediate family. Back in St. Helena, his two sons and his wife are buried in unmarked graves.

First Ambrose Bierce died quickly in the battle at Ojinaga, just across the border from the American town of Presidio. In his last postcard, mailed from Chihuahua City, Bierce informed his secretary that he was headed for Ojinaga. He rode with Pancho Villa's army as they left Chihuahua City, ready to show off his soldierly skills. According to Villa's biographer, Friedrich Katz, Bierce took up a rifle in an earlier skirmish at Tierra Blanca where he killed a Federale and, for his marksmanship, was awarded a sombrero. Both an American mercenary and a customs agent testified that they heard an old gringo was shot in the battle of Ojinaga.

And a Villista named Ybarra identified a photograph of Bierce, claiming to have seen him in Ojinaga, but never again. His body was burned with hundreds of others.

A little later, Bierce, only wounded now in the battle at Ojinaga, was spotted by a young Federale who was running for his life from the breached Ojinaga fort. With a swarm of other Federales, he was aiming to cross the Rio Grande to the U.S. side. When he saw the incoherent, moaning gringo, it occurred to him that things might go better if he showed up with a *norteamericano*. He half-floated the old man through the shallows on a two-wheeled cart, hearing him mumble his name—Ambrosia, was it? Ambrosia Price maybe? But once they made the U.S. side, they were unceremoniously swept up with hundreds of other refugees and railroaded to Marfa for processing. The gringo was delirious by then, nearly comatose. He had no papers, no identification. When he died, he was buried in a rush without a marker in the old Camp Marfa cemetery. This narrative, published in 1990 in the *Big Bend Sentinel* and later in the *Journal of Big Bend Studies,* was related to one Abelardo Sanchez of Lancaster, California, by a sixty-something-year-old hitchhiker and former Federale in 1957.

It was not long after his death in Marfa that Ambrose Bierce was killed near the village of Icamole when he and an Indian muleteer were the only ones who didn't escape as Villa's forces overran a party of government soldiers driving a mule train loaded with arms. This time Bierce was riding with the Federales. Both prisoners were executed by a firing squad under the orders of General Tomas Urbina. That's what journalist James H. Wilkins asserted in his front-page article in San Francisco's *The Bulletin* in March 1920. Wilkins had gone to Mexico and personally interviewed a witness who had managed to snatch a photo of a man—identified as Bierce—along with a few other personal possessions from the corpse before it was abandoned, unburied, in the desert.

I kept up a two-year correspondence with Padre Jaime Lienert, who served as pastor to a wide desert community that included Sierra Mojada, an isolated mountain town, where Ambrose Bierce was killed once again by suspicious government soldiers. Padre Jaime paid to have a monument erected in the cemetery that reads:

> Very trustworthy witnesses suppose
> that here lie the remains of
> 1842 Ambrose Gwinnett Bierce 1914
> a famous American writer and journalist who
> on suspicion of being a spy
> was executed and buried at this place.

It turns out that the oldest man in Sierra Mojada, Don Jesus (Chuy) Benites Avila, happened to remember an incident from his childhood. Padre Jaime translates:

> One morning when I was just a boy, a close pal of mine, Crysostomo, the son of Marcelo de Anda, the Comandante, came running up to me saying to come along because they were going to put someone to the firing squad. So we went to the corral of the soldiers' quarters, and while we were there a soldier came up to the captain and said: "We have him, and everything is ready." With that the captain dispatched several other soldiers, and everyone headed down toward the

> cemetery. There were a lot of other people following, too, and when we got to the cemetery the soldiers made everyone stand back as far as the stone wall. Then they stood the man against the wall and shot him.

Don Chuy remembered that the man was an American and was called El Ruso.

Backing up Don Chuy's story, a soldier-journalist and contemporary of Ambrose Bierce, Edward (Tex) O'Reilly, wrote in his autobiography that while he was traveling with Villa's commander Toribio Ortega, they heard rumors that a small bunch of Federales had taken Sierra Mojada. Ortega sent four hundred men "to clear them out." Those soldiers returned with a story that an American had been killed there, so O'Reilly, thinking he should report the incident to the U.S. State Department, went to investigate. He ascertained that an old gringo had shown up with maps, asking questions about trails and how to reach Villa's army. The Federales, who weren't in uniform, suspected he was a spy. Not speaking Spanish, he couldn't answer their questions, so they dragged him to the cemetery where they shot and buried him. O'Reilly, taken to the house where the dead man had been staying, asked the owner if any personal effects had been left behind. According to O'Reilly, "The old fellow reached up behind a rafter on the wall and brought out two old empty envelopes left by the Americano, and they were both addressed to Ambrose Bierce."

As multiple sequoia trunks can erupt from a large stump, many deaths can befall a single man. There are some who say that Ambrose Bierce didn't die in Mexico, that he traveled southward into Latin America as he once said he would. Others have mentioned that the handsome middle-aged Bierce looks suspiciously like Mexican American writer and journalist Francisco Goldman, implying perhaps that Bierce discovered an occult serum to age him slowly youthward, his literary style changing with the times. A past forks into innumerable directions.

Forrest Gander is an award-winning poet, novelist and translator. His numerous books include As a Friend, Science & Steepleflower, Core Samples from the World, *and* The Trace, *which will be published in November.* He is the A. K. Seaver Professor of Literary Arts and Comparative Literature at Brown University.

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Meshack Creek road is a lonely little back road that runs through the woods near Tompkinsville in Monroe County. It's also a road that some find difficult to exit, even when they're no longer alive.

The ghost that haunt this lonely Kentucky road seems to be looking either for a way out , or maybe just a few thrills. Along a bend in the road grows an old sycamore tree. It's said that whenever someone riding a horse or a motorcycle passes by this tree, they can feel a presence jump on behind them and grip them tightly around the waist.

Those who have felt it describe the sensation of being gripped by the ghost as being unmistakable as the sensation of being gripped by a pair of strong human arms. Some people report the arms pressing into them, as if encouraging them to go faster. The spirit always seems to let go and disappear before the rider reaches the end of Meshack Creek Road.

Whatever the mysterious presence that hops on by the old sycamore tree, it seems to mean people no harm. Instead, it seems to just want to go along for the ride. Is this a ghost that is condemned to haunt the narrow stretch of road by the tree for all eternity that is trying desperately to escape its prison? Perhaps.

But horses and fast racing are a deep part of the soul of Kentucky. Young Kentucky men have loved the feeling of riding a fast horse for a long, long time. It could be that that the ghostly hitchhiker of Meshack Creek Road is the spirit of someone who loved fast riding and feeling the wind in his hair while alive, perhaps someone who died long ago while charging down that road on a magnificent Kentucky thoroughbred who was thrown from his horse and died near the tree. Perhaps it's a spirit who still fide the thrill of the race more tempting than anything that waits beyond, and who just wants to feel that thrill again and again.

So if you're riding your chopper down that lonely road on some beautiful Kentucky evening and as you pass that sycamore tree, if you feel those arms gripping your waist, give it a little gas. You and the spirit will both enjoy it.

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The mysterious disappearance of a celebrity preacher

24November2014 bbc.com

Aimee Semple McPherson

Aimee Semple McPherson was one of the most glamorous women in the US in the 1920s. The evangelical preacher put on theatrical church services and used ground-breaking radio broadcasts to teach the gospel - but one mysterious episode in her life has never been fully explained.

On 18 May 1926, Aimee Semple McPherson went to Venice Beach, Los Angeles, to take a swim and write a sermon.

The female assistant who'd gone with her had to leave to make a short phone call from a nearby hotel. When she returned she couldn't see the evangelist anywhere.

As evening fell, McPherson was still missing and her followers rushed to the beach to join the search. One young man drowned as he swam out towards two dead seals which he'd mistaken for her body.

"A local newspaper even speculated that there had been a sea monster sighted off Venice Beach," says McPherson's biographer, Matthew Sutton. "They thought maybe this sea monster had swallowed McPherson whole."

Others thought that the evangelist would be miraculously resurrected. For five weeks, national newspapers carried rival theories about what had happened to McPherson.

9 O'CLOCK A. M. EDITION

The Los Angeles Times

AIMEE M'PHERSON DROWNED, BELIEF

Wet Leads for Senate in Pennsylvania Vote

VARE, ADVOCATE OF DRY LAW MODIFICATION, IS APPARENTLY WINNER OVER PEPPER, PINCHOT

Sailers Rescue Flyers in Sea

FORD AIRPLANE PILOT IS KILLED IN WINDSTORM

Reported Victim of Beach Tragedy

FAMOUS PASTOR VANISHES WHILE BATHING IN SEA

THE FOURSQUARE CHURCH

Newspaper headline "Aimee McPherson drowned, belief"

Had she drowned? Had she staged the ultimate theatrical stunt? Had the weight of her own fame just become too much? Then one day in June she re-emerged in the small town of Agua Prieta on the Mexico-Arizona border.

McPherson claimed she'd been kidnapped - but had she?

Find out more

Sister Aimee is broadcast on BBC World Service on Tuesday 25 November at 20:30 GMT. It is also available on iPlayer Radio.

Her story to that date had already been extraordinary. She was born Aimee Elizabeth Kennedy on a farm in Ontario, Canada, in 1890. As a teenager, she'd gone to hear an Irish Pentecostal preacher, Robert Semple, speak in her local town.

Before long she'd married him and joined his life on the road. But a trip they took to Hong Kong as missionaries ended in disaster. Both she and her husband fell ill with malaria. He died but she survived, pregnant with her first child.

When McPherson returned to America she felt the call to travel and preach. "She was a spellbinding speaker," says Sutton.

"She knew how to use dramatic tricks to draw audiences, and so she turned out to be enormously popular. What made her most popular was her seeming ability to lay hands on the sick and to heal them."

Soon McPherson, known as Sister Aimee to her followers, had become a preaching sensation touring across the US during the early 1920s.

Aimee Semple McPherson (far right, standing with raised arms), c. 1930

It was an unusual choice of career for a single mother - and before long she was also a divorcee. Her second marriage to Harold McPherson, with whom she had another child, ended partly because he found it so difficult to walk in her shadow as her fame grew.

In 1923, she built a permanent base for her religious movement - a white-domed church called Angelus Temple in the Echo Park neighbourhood of Los Angeles. She put on elaborate services for the public and bought a radio station to broadcast to listeners at home.

These were no ordinary sermons - they were more like music hall performances. "She had the best actors, the best set designers, the best costumes, the best make-up artists and professional lighting," says Sutton. "She would create these stories, these dramas in which biblical stories would come to life."

Aimee McPherson in a costume

The crowds were so large, people had to queue around the block to get a seat. At Angelus Temple today you can still see the theatre-like layout - complete with a stage at the centre.

"It was quite simply the best show in town" says the temple's archivist Steve Zeleny. "She would call the construction crew and say 'I need you to build me a 20ft Trojan horse that's hollow on the inside' or 'I need you to build me a huge ship, the bow needs to stick out 20ft. It needs to have guns on it with smoke coming out.'"

Often her crew would only have a week to finish these lavish sets. Charlie Chaplin used to advise McPherson

on which of her productions worked best. In fact, over the years the Hollywood actor struck up an unlikely friendship with this conservative Pentecostal preacher.

line

The International Church of the Foursquare Gospel

Angelus Temple postcard

- Founded by Aimee Semple McPherson who opened its first church, Angelus Temple, on 1 January 1923
- Today there are 1,719 Foursquare churches in the US
- More than 66,000 meeting places around the world in 140 countries and territories including the Philippines, Kenya and the Dominican Republic
- The term Foursquare Gospel comes from the book of Ezekiel, who saw God revealed with four different faces: a man, a lion, an ox and an eagle - McPherson equated these with four aspects of Jesus

Source: The Foursquare Church

line

As a retreat from her superstar lifestyle, McPherson built a house, perched on a rock above Lake Elsinore, a 90-minute car ride from Los Angeles. It is a castle influenced by her travels in the Middle East - it looks a bit out of place in the Californian landscape with a white exterior, crenellated roof and mosaic-encrusted dome.

"She was constantly being followed," explains my guide Erin Funk, a preacher in the Pentecostal church founded by McPherson.

"To give people an understanding about how popular she was and how much people followed her, it would be the equivalent of Princess Diana," she says as she shows me around the exquisite Art Deco rooms with beautiful murals and tiled walls. There's even a subterranean passage from the garage into the house so that McPherson could avoid reporters.

But McPherson's mysterious disappearance in 1926 and her reappearance in Agua Prieta gave reporters exactly what they wanted.

When she turned up in the dusty border town "she came to a family's home and she knocked on the door," says 1920s enthusiast Kim Cooper.

"She tells them that she's been walking for hours and hours having escaped from a weird little hut where she was held captive by three people."

Aimee Semple McPherson's house

McPherson claimed she'd been persuaded by the three strangers to leave the beach on that fateful afternoon back in May to pray for a sick child lying in the back of a car. "As she bent into this car, she was shoved inside and chloroformed and the next thing she knew she was imprisoned," says Cooper.

Not everyone, though, subscribes to this theory. Biographer Matthew Sutton believes she had run away with her sound engineer - a married man called Kenneth Ormiston, who also disappeared at the same time. "I'm 99% confident that she had an affair," he says.

"I suspect she ran away with Ormiston then ultimately after a month reading the newspapers and seeing what was happening she decided to make this dramatic return. The kidnapping story was the best means she came up with for doing it."

Aimee Semple McPherson

To this day, there is a great deal of debate about what exactly happened. When McPherson returned to Los Angeles she faced a grand jury investigation into her kidnapping story - but it ended up more preoccupied with her private life.

That's why McPherson's story attracts such attention and why she's been parodied in various plays and books. Cole Porter, for example, turned her into the "sensuous sermonizer" Reno Sweeney in the musical Anything Goes.

Today, her followers say the scandalous accounts of her life overlook all the good work she did on the streets of Los Angeles, especially during the Depression. When government agencies failed to clothe and feed the poor, Angelus Temple stepped in helping 1.5 million people get back on their feet.

But according to Jane Shaw, professor of religious studies at Stanford University, McPherson's biggest legacy is the way she combined "a conservative form of religion with the media of modernity". In many ways her radio station laid the way for America's modern televangelists.

On 27 September 1944 Aimee Semple McPherson was found dead in a hotel room in Oakland, California. A lifelong insomniac, the 53-year-old had taken too many sedatives - but her followers insist it wasn't suicide.

Her body was flown back to Los Angeles where she lay in state for three days and three nights at the temple she had built for her ground-breaking movement.

Her Foursquare Church still exists to this day and claims a membership of 8 million worldwide. You can still visit Angelus Temple on a Sunday for a service but it's a very different congregation to the one that listened to McPherson. Nowadays the worshippers are mainly Hispanic - a sign of the changing demographics of both Los Angeles and modern-day Pentecostalism in America.

Additional reporting by Nick White.

Sister Aimee is broadcast on BBC World Service on Tuesday 25 November at 20:30 GMT. It's also available on iPlayer Radio.

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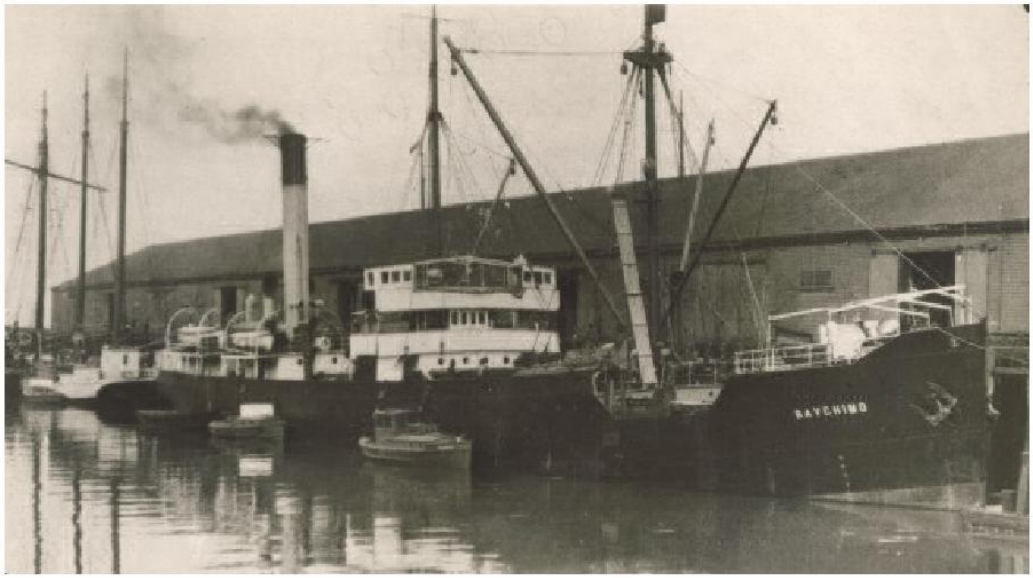
The Mysterious Ghost Ship of the Arctic

September 29, 2014 By Brent Swancer

The seas of the world have always been full of mystery, wonder, and often just plain weirdness. One of the more bizarre phenomena of the high seas is the occurrence of various ghost ships throughout history, vessels that are adrift at sea, wandering about without any discernable living crew. Spooky stories of ghost ships have pervaded the lore of the sea for centuries, and they have become a fixture of any discussion on truly weird goings on upon the ocean.

Ghost ships typically fall into two categories, those that are purportedly phantom ships powered by unknown supernatural forces or piloted by ghost crews, and those that are derelicts with crews that have vanished, often under mysterious and unexplainable circumstances. Usually it is fairly easy to discern the two, yet there are cases where it cannot be readily determined if we are looking at a simple derelict or something more supernatural, and indeed more sinister in nature. One of the more bizarre ghost ship cases on record must surely be that of the SS Baychimo, which has actually transcended the designation as a mere ghost ship and gone on to become one of the greatest and most enduring modern day maritime mysteries.

The SS Baychimo was a steel-hulled 1,322 ton, steam-powered vessel that started its life in Sweden when it was constructed in 1914. Its career as an ocean going cargo ship started under the name Ångermanelfven for a German shipping company, where it spent some time as a trading vessel operating between Hamburg and Sweden until World War I began. In the aftermath of the war, the ship was transferred to Britain as war reparations for losses the Germans had cost British shipping, and it was rechristened the Baychimo. The Baychimo was acquired by The Hudson's Bay Company and was based in Scotland, from where it was sent across the Atlantic to the north coast of Canada and carrying cargo such as furs and pelts between trading posts across the frigid, icy waters of the Arctic. The ship was mostly used to trade provisions for fur with Inuit settlements, but it also made voyages to Alaska and British Columbia carrying various cargo and passengers.



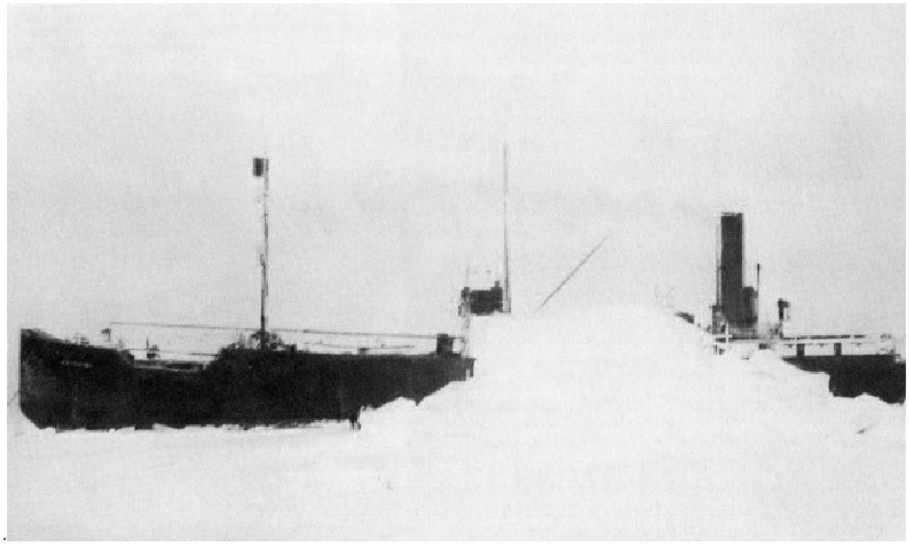
The SS Baychimo

The Baychimo and its crew performed their duties well, braving rough, frigid seas, foul weather, and perilous ice floes to perform a total of nine successful journeys to and from Alaska and British Columbia across less than calm waters. On October 1, 1931, the ship's luck would run out. The Baychimo was on a

routine transport run to Vancouver with a cargo of valuable furs, however, the crew had not accounted for the fact that winter had come earlier than usual that year. The ship and its crew were tossed about by icy blasts of wind and gripped by freezing temperatures, yet they pressed on, determined to deliver their precious cargo. Even as they pushed on through the ominous weather and menacingly choppy seas, a sudden blizzard descended upon the ship and brought with it chunks of pack ice that began to surround the Baychimo and its terrified crew. The ship became trapped by the circling ice floes, which closed in around it and gripped it in a cage of ice as the helpless crew looked on.

Unable to continue their voyage, and facing a possible sinking ship, the captain ordered the crew to abandon the ship and make their way to the town of Barrow on foot, which was about a mile of treacherous, shifting ice floes away. They were able to make it to their destination and took shelter in Barrow for two days before returning to check on the status of their abandoned ship. When they arrived, they were surprised to find that the vessel had broken free of the ice in their absence and was aimlessly drifting about the area. The crew decided to wait until they could retrieve the ship, and built a camp out on the ice nearby where they could keep an eye on it. Unfortunately for theBaychimo's crew, the foul weather did not let up, and on October 8, the ship was mired in ice once again. This time, the ice was more reluctant to let go, and the ship remained ensconced within its cold prison with no sign of being freed anytime soon.

On October 15, with the blizzard continuing to pound their camp, The Hudson Bay Company took action and sent a recue party to evacuate the crew from their imperiled camp by aircraft. Although 22 of the crew were rescued, the captain and 14 crew members refused to abandon their ship and its cargo, and opted to remain camped out on the ice despite the punishing storm. Receiving provisions from the company, they were prepared to stubbornly wait out the entire winter if that was what it took



The SS Baychimo trapped in ice

On November 24, a particularly vicious blizzard swept in and visibility in the swirling clouds of snow became nonexistent. The crew that had remained behind lost sight of the ship and when the storm lifted the following day, the Baychimo was nowhere to be seen. The vessel had simply vanished. Considering the severity of the storm that had hit them and the fact that there was no trace of the Baychimo in the vicinity, the captain and crew assumed that the ship had broken apart and sunk into the dark, frigid depths. The dejected crew decided to pack up their camp and head back to civilization.

Imagine the crew's surprise when a week later, a native Inuit seal hunter scoffed at the idea that the ship had sunk and told them that he had just seen it floating around a few days prior, not 45 miles from where it had been trapped in the ice. The crew excitedly packed up their gear again and headed out to see if they could retrieve their lost ship. Luck was on their side, and they managed to track down the Baychimo exactly where the hunter had said it would be and they eagerly boarded. After an examination of the Baychimo's condition, the captain decided that it had been too badly damaged by its ordeal in the ice, and was unlikely to remain seaworthy through the winter. It was surmised that the vessel would soon break apart and sink, so the crew frantically salvaged some of the more valuable furs they had been transporting and had them airlifted by The Hudson Bay Company, after which the ship was abandoned and left to its inevitable fate.

The Baychimo was obviously tougher than its captain had given it credit for, because it did indeed survive the winter, and began its ascent into the annals of sea legend. People began to report seeing the ship cruising about the cold north Atlantic waters, totally intact and seemingly unmanned. The first such sighting came when a dog sledder heading for Nome, Alaska, spotted the ship adrift near shore, and the number of sightings took off from there. The path of the Baychimo was unpredictable and erratic, with the ship sometimes being seen near shore but at other times far out to sea, and it was sighted alternately in both open water and trapped within ice, in wildly disparate locations.

The ghost ship of the Arctic before it disappeared

In addition to the sightings, there were those who tried to approach the ship only for it to seem to elude pursuit uncannily well for a vessel without a crew. On occasion, theBaychimo was reported to simply vanish from view before it could be reached. Those that did actually manage to catch up with the elusive ship had little success in their endeavors to actually board it. Every attempt to board the derelict vessel was thwarted in some way, and every crew that tried were forced to let it go for one reason or another. Sometimes, the pursuers were simply not equipped to handle the task of salvaging the massive vessel, but other times failure came under more mysterious circumstances. It was reported that it was common for sudden and violent storms to move in without warning upon any move to board the ship, and it is said that quite a few people lost their lives trying. One group of Inuit that once boarded the ghost ship in 1933 for shelter as it was caught in ice ended up being trapped within its walls for 10 days as a sudden, fierce storm raged outside. Other times when people managed to get on board, ice floes would appear out of the surrounding waters like sharks drawn to a whale carcass, and made any hope of salvage impossible. In addition, towlines connected to the Baychimo often snapped either due to rough seas, jagged ice, or even at times for no apparent reason at all, and all of this gave the distinct and eerie impression that the wayward Baychimo did not want to be boarded.

Due to the difficulties that all who tried had in their efforts to board or salvage the ship, the Baychimo over the years accrued a reputation as being a cursed vessel, a bad omen, and by 1939 there were many ships that would flee rather than approach upon sighting it. In 1939, after another failed attempt to board it, the Baychimo disappeared into the cold expanse of the Arctic for the next 23 years. It was thought that the ship had finally run out of whatever power had kept it going all those years and finally sunk, but in March, 1962, a group of Inuits saw it drifting along near the coastline of the Beaufort Sea. The ship had returned from wherever it had gone. The mysterious ship was subsequently sighted several more times up to 1969, when it was seen stuck in a pack of ice, as it was wont to do. It would be the last time anyone would see the ship. When a salvage party came to investigate the 1969 report of the Baychimo in ice, it had vanished by the time anyone arrived. No one has seen it since.

After this 1969 account, it was widely believed that this time, the sea had finally conquered the vessel and that it had sunk, but no trace of wreckage was ever found despite a few searches for it in the area where it was last seen. In 2006, there was resurgence in interest in the mysterious fate of the Baychimo, and the government of Alaska announced its intentions to locate the vessel. So far, they have found nothing, not even so much as a scrap. It is as if the ship has just vanished without a trace from the face of the earth. The fate of the Baychimo and her cargo, which is still in her hold untouched, remain unknown. What happened to this ship? Did the sea finally claim it? Was it salvaged without anyone knowing about it? Or is it still out there cutting through the Arctic waters of the far north, perhaps with some unfathomable intent of its own? Until it emerges from hiding to be sighted again, or someone finds the wreckage, the ultimate fate of this ghost ship of the Arctic will remain beyond our grasp.

The mystery of the "Tjipetir plates" revives the ghost of the "Titanic"

lefigaro.fr

These flat, made 90 years ago in Indonesia, wash up on our shores by the hundreds.

These flat, made 90 years ago in Indonesia, wash up on our shores by the hundreds.

Hundreds of gum slabs, arrived on the Atlantic coast in recent years, Could escape the holds of the sunken "Titanic".

In late January, Benjamin walks with His Family on the beach of Mimizan, looking for driftwood. Aim the storms of recent weeks-have Deposited on the sand a curious item: a gray rubber flat about 30 to 50 cm, etched in ict with Entire length a strange inscription: "Tjipetir." Soon, the boy learns That he is not the first to do this kind of discovery, have reported about by *Southwest* . For Nearly two years, Hundreds of Such plates were found on the Atlantic coast, from northern Spain to the UK, aim Abebooks web know Exactly Where They come from. In France, the first censuses dates back to September 2013.

From the first investigations, the mystery deepens a little more. "Tjipetir" Refers to the name of a small town in the west of the island of Java, qui in the early twentieth century, Has Specialized in the manufacture of plates gutta-percha, original natural latex year, Whereas for the manufacturing of Many everyday items, from travel trunks up golf balls. Aim with the emergence of synthetic materials, the craze for gutta percha HAS Declined gradually, and the factory closed in 1920. Eighty-ten years Tjipetir later, the flat comes on our shores yet .dropoff window

The last secret of the "Titanic"?

Reviews The most credible solution Would thesis flat from the cargo ship wrecked Some early Twentieth Century. Now, Among the hypotheses, a name stands out, That of the *Titanic* . The flat Were THUS down with the giant off Newfoundland on the night of April 14 to 15, 1912. Before being white has released century later Because of the disintegration of the wreck.

The different locations were found the famous flat selon the "Mystery Tjipetir" page.

This theory is the more attractive it is Scientifically consistent. François Galgani, researcher at Ifremer , said: "I am Not Saying That flat thesis come from the *Titanic* Ocean currents, the Gulf Stream and North Atlantic, but nothing to disprove this hypothesis. " Could very well

The different locations were found the famous flat selon the "Mystery Tjipetir" page.

bring-Drift thesis items to our shores. Another index, the broad dispersion of flat spectrum attests to a distant sources beyond the coastline. Finally, the special feature of this kind of latex, qui degraded very Quickly to light, says it HAS Remained so far "in a protected environment, SUCH AS the hold of a ship."

Nevertheless, a Spokesman for the City of the Sea of Cherbourg, qui devout a permanent exhibition *Titanic,* this explanation Believes That Remains "Unlikely." "We checked the cargo, There Were three boxes of well plates in the boat, as we know purpose the exact number or are referenced by a serial number. But, she adds, They were found in the holds of ships all at the time. "Paul-Henri Nargeolet exploring the wreck of the Titanic in 1987. More importantly, it is share of the only team to be, through a robot, back in the holds of the ship. His last day exploration 2010: "We-have seen objects, quite difficulty to Identify, qui resembles gum slabs, drank it might as Well Be stacks of canvas bag . I Was aussi Abebooks web sites, he says amused, If I had not seen the movie Renault [Cameron, Ed] qui really Existed. Purpose It Was Surely cruised DURING THE sinking, as It Were thin sheet, It Does nothing to stay in today . "If the wreck crumbles, It Does not damaged sccm Him enough for" liberate "its treasures.

The flat must therefore come from Reviews another boat. *The Telegram* cites the case of *Moerdyck,* a Dutch cargo ship wrecked in the English Channel in 1904, aim in this case, the position of the vessel Would not allowed que le-have flat scatter over Such Great distances. Meanwhile, the Web has fun with Each New discovery. On Facebook, a page created Was Even " Tjipetir Mystery ", inviting users to Identify Their find. And the research field continued to expand, since last Saturday Was found on the flat Swedish coast.

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lefigaro.fr

The nuclear attack on the UK that never happened

29 October 2014 bbc.com

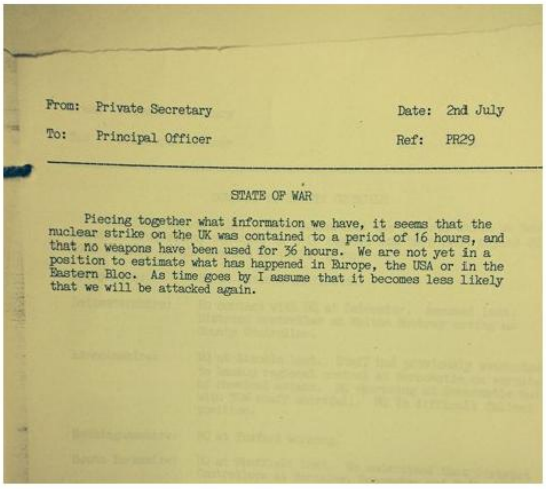
The 1984 BBC drama Threads depicted the aftermath of nuclear war

In 1982, a secret Home Office exercise tested the UK's capacity to rebuild after a massive nuclear attack. Files recently released at the National Archives detail one short-lived proposal to recruit psychopaths to help keep order.

More than 300 megatons of nuclear bombs are detonated over Britain, in the space of a 16-hour exchange. Many cities are flattened - millions are dead from the blast, millions more have survived and suffer radiation sickness. In bunkers are 12 regional commissioners with their staff, ready to come out and take charge. How do they do this? How do they restore order and begin to rebuild?

This was what a top-secret Home Office exercise intended to test in 1982, according to documents recently released at the National Archives. Optimistically termed Regenerate, this was a war game covering the first six months after the nuclear exchange of World War Three. It focused on one central region, the five counties of Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire.

Officials imagined what would happen after the bombs had dropped. They knew the most likely targets in the area, and predicted how "rings" of damage would affect the country. At the epicentres of the bombs, there would be "unimaginable" damage, on the outer ring "broken panes" and "debris in the streets". The scientific advisers estimated 50% of the country would be untouched - though survivors could be affected by radiation fallout.



From: Private Secretary Date: 2nd July

To: Principal Officer Ref: PR29

STATE OF WAR

Piecing together what information we have, it seems that the nuclear strike on the UK was contained to a period of 16 hours, and that no weapons have been used for 36 hours. We are not yet in a position to estimate what has happened in Europe, the USA or in the Eastern Bloc. As time goes by I assume that it becomes less likely that we will be attacked again.

Planning the war game, one civil servant tried to imagine how law and order would be maintained. Jane Hogg, a scientific officer in the Home Office, envisaged the police would be busy helping "inadequate" people in disaster-struck areas, and suggested that another group could be recruited to help keep order.

"It is... generally accepted that around 1% of the population are psychopaths," she wrote.

"These are the people who could be expected to show no psychological effects in the communities

which have suffered the severest losses."

Hogg suggested psychopaths would be "very good in crises" as "they have no feelings for others, nor moral code, and tend to be very intelligent and logical".

Her bosses were unconvinced. One scribbled: "I am not at all sure you convince me. I would regard them as dangerous whether or not recruited into post-attack organisation."

The psychopath option didn't make it into the game play, which was developed by the local government operational research unit.

The exercise set out a series of local events that those involved would have to respond to as war came closer, and after the bombs fell.

The "players", who would have been civil servants, officers from the police, fire services and military, were given choices as the scenario developed.

For instance, as the strike loomed, the game imagined the chief executive of South Yorkshire making "very pessimistic" public statements about survival in the event of war. Fifteen thousand families left his area and camped in nearby Derbyshire, in tents and caravans. What should be done, asked the game.

After the brief, deadly exchange, Exercise Regenerate imagined local headquarters being badly affected - Leicester bunker destroyed, HQ at Lincoln lost, HQ at Sheffield lost. Only Derbyshire, with its HQ at Matlock, was unaffected.

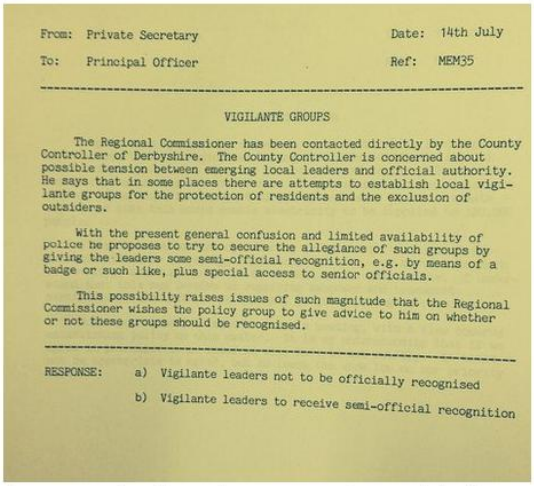
If this is starting to sound vaguely familiar, it's because it is very close to the plot of the award-winning BBC Drama Threads, which was broadcast in 1984. That followed the fortunes of two families in South Yorkshire, before and after nuclear war. Acclaimed at the time for its shockingly detailed portrayal of the impact of nuclear strike, it closely followed Exercise Regenerate. The drama's producer, Mick Jackson, knew about the game, and the file shows he'd made a formal request to observe it. He was turned down.

The breakdown - or disorder - depicted in Threads was how the game imagined the days and weeks after the strike. Vigilante groups emerged, challenging the authorities. Within the bunkers, morale fell. Some industry survived, but who would run it and how? The administration was weak.

In May 1982 at the Easingwold training centre in Yorkshire some officials tried to play the game. It did not work well. One player said it failed to go far enough - it was supposed to model what would happen up to 18 months after nuclear attack, but too much time was spent on the pre-strike period.

The officials went "back to the drawing board", only to discover the computer had been corrupted. That seems to have been the end of the exercise.

Lord Hennessy, author of The Secret State, said he'd never seen a civil defence exercise quite like this, where it was - albeit briefly - suggested psychopaths could be recruited to keep



From: Private Secretary Date: 14th July

To: Principal Officer Ref: MEM35

VIGILANTE GROUPS

The Regional Commissioner has been contacted directly by the County Controller of Derbyshire. The County Controller is concerned about possible tension between emerging local leaders and official authority. He says that in some places there are attempts to establish local vigilante groups for the protection of residents and the exclusion of outsiders.

With the present general confusion and limited availability of police he proposes to try to secure the allegiance of such groups by giving the leaders some semi-official recognition, e.g. by means of a badge or such like, plus special access to senior officials.

This possibility raises issues of such magnitude that the Regional Commissioner wishes the policy group to give advice to him on whether or not these groups should be recognised.

RESPONSE: a) Vigilante leaders not to be officially recognised

b) Vigilante leaders to receive semi-official recognition

order after a nuclear strike. He described it as "extraordinary" and "bizarre", though noted that element was "stamped on pretty quickly".

He has seen many secret documents planning for nuclear war. "They always take my breath away," he said. "The sense of civil servants having to look into the abyss, imagine the unimaginable."

Twenty five years since the Cold War ended, most of this secret planning is known now. But Lord Hennessy said: "We still don't have the detailed plans for using the Royal Yacht as the Queen's bunker." In the event of nuclear war, he said, the yacht would be "lurking" in the sea lochs in Scotland out of reach of Soviet radar, with the Queen, Prince Philip, the Home Secretary on board.

"But I can't pick up the phone and ask the Queen: 'Can I have your Armageddon file, Ma'am?' That would be regarded as extremely bad form."

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The Okefenokee X-Files *are stories of weird and supernatural occurrences related to the Okefenokee Swamp. These following accounts are documented paranormal stories of the unexplained and the unusual along with some just pretty weird stuff that has all happened in and around the Okefenokee Swamp including: UFO sightings, Alien abductions, Ghost sightings, Hauntings, Big Foot sightings featuring the infamous Skunk Ape and the South Georgia Pig Man .*

An Introduction

Long before Europeans or their descendants discovered “The Land of Trembling Earth”, the indigenous tribal peoples who lived in and around the Okefenokee held a fear and reverence for certain supernatural aspects of Okefenokee swamp. The earliest pioneer settlers living around the swamp, all had stories of unexplained phenomenon and strange occurrences related to the Okefenokee.

UFO sightings have been attributed to eerie and unearthly lights generated by so called “Swamp Gas”. Add to this the fact that a swamp is the modern equivalent of the prehistoric dinosaur’s habitat. Then you try to guess, what’s the dominant creature lounging at the top of the swamp food chain, other than man? Why it’s the American Alligator of course. Gators are direct throwback descendants from reptiles of the Mesozoic Era “The Age of Dinosaurs”. Regardless of Okefenokee’s actual age, which is considered very young geologically. This mosaic of wetlands is a fascinating time portal to be able to see and experience some things that would have existed hundreds of millions of years ago.

The allure and lore of Okefenokee, has inspired movie makers, novelists, artists, and storytellers alike. A favorite monster, The Creature of the Black Lagoon was reportedly inspired by visits to the Okefenokee. In the past, a swamp was always portrayed as gloomy, dismal, foreboding and a mysterious place to fear and avoid. Now days some of us have evolved beyond stereotypical misconceptions and possess the enlightened comprehension of what a big southern swamp is and how it functions. Strange and mysterious attributes may come to be appreciated as sublimely unique, unusual, highly enchanting and intimidating naturally occurring features.

Historically human beings journeyed to deserts, mountains and seas seeking inspiration and enlightenment. Mankind just may have overlooked this primordial nexus, the nursery and catalyst of lifeforms on our planet.

Numerous extraordinary events have occurred and continually seem to pop up in and around the Okefenokee. We hope you will find these case studies interesting, thought provoking and worth the visit.

should not be observing.

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SWAMP RELATED BIG FOOT X-FILES

Bigfoot Sighting

THE PIG MAN A.K.A. SASQUATCH SIGHTINGS

It has been many years since a sighting, but old swampers would call him the South Georgia Pig Man. Over the years reported sightings have persisted in and around the South Georgia swamp areas, especially deep in the remote recesses of the Okefenokee swamp.

Reports describe the creature as a large ape like being, that walks upright, has abundant hair and a nose similar to a pig. Observers have commented on a skunk like odor that has accompanied the sightings. There have been no reports of hostility or aggression, in fact the creature was referred to as timid and shy with sad expressive eyes.

These Okefenokee area sightings have many details in common with creature sightings documented in the Everglades. A very similar missing link referred to as the Florida Skunk Ape. Could it be possible these beings are related genetically?

Before development transformed Florida, these man like creatures might have migrated. One of their routes could have been by way of the Kissimmee River Valley up along the Lake Wales Ridge to the extensive game rich swamps associated with the St. John's River Basin.

The migration would have passed right by what is today the city of Jacksonville onward to the Okefenokee and beyond.

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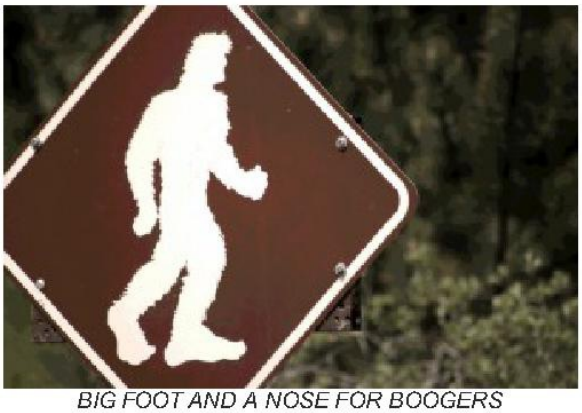

BIG FOOT AND A NOSE FOR BOOGERS

This information was sent to Okefenokee X-Files from a respected source about a creature sighted occasionally in a place just to the south of Okefenokee near Palatka, Florida.

This Abominable Snowman of rural Putnam County Florida is called "The Bardin Booger", named for the small community nearby the sightings. The Booger has been spotted along isolated creeks that meander through the woods to the St. Johns River. Reports on the "Booger" have him up to 8 feet tall, very hairy, walking upright, footprints to 18" long and 8" wide, a pug nose and smelling really bad.

Stories of “Yeti” type creatures in the Southeast such as the Skunk Ape, the Booger and the Pig Man have many common threads. It seems that only in isolated, remote, and sparsely populated areas are humans able to be aware of these missing links.

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BEWARE THE Roux-Ga-Roux!!

A SWAMP THING

The Okefenokee Swamp was truly a land of mystery in June 1829, when the Milledgeville Statesman published a bizarre story about it. The tale was related by a John Ostean, “residing on the borders of this swamp in Ware County,” and others who lived on the opposite side in Florida. Locals had long heard from Creek Indians of an enchanted island inhabited by “mortals of super-human dimensions and incomparable beauty.” The story goes that two men and a boy had taken advantage of a long dry spell and pushed deep into the swamp for two weeks to seek this island. However, “their progress suddenly arrested at the appearance of the print of a foot-step so unearthly in its dimensions, so ominous of power, and terrible in form,” that they paused. The print was eighteen inches long and nine inches across, the stride of this giant over six feet. The party hastily returned and spread the tale of the “Man Mountain.”

Hearing the story, nine Florida hunters ventured into the swamp. After several days’ journey, they found a similar print and others. The men followed the tracks for several days and had camped on a ridge when two of their members “simultaneously discharged at an advancing and ferocious wild beast” whose screams made the swamp “reverberate with a deafening roar.” The creature came “full in their view advancing upon them with a terrible look… Our little band instinctively gathered close in a body, and presented their rifles. The huge being, nothing daunted, bounded upon his victims, and in the same instant received the contents of seven rifles. But he did not die alone; nor until he had glutted his wrath with the death of five of them, which he effected by wringing off the head from the body.” The four surviving men examined the prostrate giant as it died, “wallowing and roaring. His length was thirteen feet, and his breadth and volume of just proportions.” Fearing the struggle might have alerted similar beings; the men gathered their comrades’ guns and fled for home.

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A BOY AND HIS BIG FOOT

This report was forwarded to the Georgia Swamp Ape Research Center, GSARC and detailed an encounter in the Okefenokee Swamp. While a fourteen-year-old boy and his family were camping on the West side at Stephen Foster State Park in 1972, the boy was walking along a waterway when he heard footsteps behind him, drawing closer. He assumed it was his siblings. “I figured they were going to scare me, and I decided to let them sneak up and I would jump out and scare them.” Moments later “a thing that looked like a cross between a chimpanzee and a little man” approached along the path. “It saw me and let out a

Picking a Pathway Through the Bluebells in Gillham Wood

sound like from hell," then crouched down and nimbly sprung on the boy. "It knocked me down and tried to get its teeth in (to) my neck. I screamed. I thought I was dead."

Fortunately, the youngster's parents heard the scream and shouted back. "It raised up real slow and sniffed the air for a few seconds," he continued. "Then it just got up and walked into the canal and swam across to the other side," disappearing into the woods.

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Roosevelt Island_2012 03 04_0100

TWO FOR THE SWAMP

These two swamp stories have sites but no dates.

Two farmers were deer hunting near the Waycross side of the swamp and observed a seven-and-a-half-foot-tall creature covered with grayish brown hair crossing the Southern Railroad tracks. The creature stopped and stared at them for a while, and they stared back. The huge humanoid finally lumbered off disappearing into the swamp.

Some years ago a family visiting their grandmothers house at the Okefenokee Swamp were passing the time fishing. Suddenly, the mother "began screaming and pointing at this thing that was carrying away our stringer," said a man who was twelve at the time and related the story recently to the GEORGIA SWAMP APE RESEARCH CENTER. The creature was thirty yards distant, loping along a creek. The father shouted angrily at the animal and pursued until he got close "and it turned around and screamed at us."

The father turned and ran, quickly gathering the family into the car and leaving. That night Granny informed the family "she heard stuff around all the time but stayed in the house at night."

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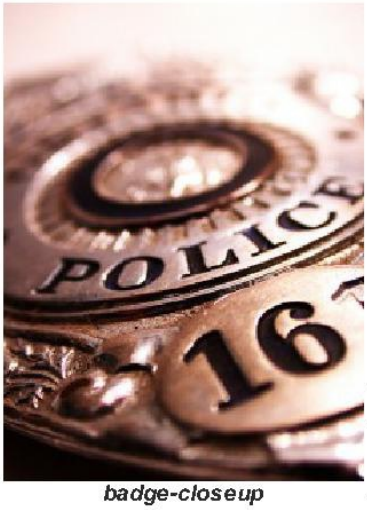

badge-closeup

THE BIG FOOT BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

The Georgia Swamp Ape Research Center, like a number of other organizations around the globe, was set up to study and investigate the existence of big hairy and smelly hominids, a semi-recognized science called crypto zoology. The GSARC concentrates mainly on the study and documentation of Georgia's Bigfoot creatures.

Bigfoot had been generally considered a resident of the deep woods of the Northwest. Consider the Southeast, with many areas that are largely wilderness, sporting huge tracts of woods, extensive systems of rivers and creeks, vast swamps and areas that like the Okefenokee, are for all practical purposes inaccessible to humans.

The GSARC believed that Southern Bigfoots are seven to nine feet in height, with attendant long strides. They average eight hundred pounds, are covered in hair, and give off horrid odors. The organization proposes the creatures have always lived in the region and point to the Indian legends of huge hairy spirits who lived in the swamps and woodlands as well as the monster stories told by the early settlers to this region.

Sightings of Bigfoot in Georgia are often associated with arrangements of trees and limbs into territorial markers. Researchers have found trees stripped of bark to a height of twelve feet and some trees were broken and twisted in such a way it was obviously a creature much stronger than any human. Cattle and deer are occasionally found brutally killed by something, possessing an appetite for certain internal organs.

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Sunset with storm front moving in

DOWN BY THE RIVER, I SAW A YETI

This information was forwarded to the X-Files by a reliable source.

Printed as submitted.

When I was a boy, some 20 something years ago, my daddy and I were fishing bush hooks at night in the St. Marys River a little north of the swamp. We were in a little john boat and had a flashlight lantern to see by. We had paddled up into a small lake just off the main river when I heard something that scared me. I heard something BIG tromping through the woods between us and the main river. It sounded like it walked on two legs by the rhythm of its strides. It paused for a second and then made a gigantic SPLASH! The boat rocked as the waves from the splash reached us. I was terrified, but my daddy had the flashlight in one hand and a big catfish on a bush hook in the other and I couldn't see

anything behind me where the noise was. After a few seconds of splashing, I heard whatever it was climb up the opposite bank and continue crashing on down the river bank away from us. I don't know for sure what it was, but I think it was too big and too heavy to have been a deer. I suppose it could have been a bear, but it sounded like it was tromping through on two legs and I'm sure it could see us and wasn't fearful in the least to jump into the water almost on top of us. I was more concerned with staying away from that area the next day than I was of trying to look for any tracks from the night before. A few months later, I rode my bicycle down to the same general area and walked down the riverbank to fish a little. There were no cars or other people there when I arrived. After a little while, I heard some commotion back towards the landing where I had left my bike. I walked out to find my bike knocked over and my tackle box rolled. I didn't see anyone or any vehicles, but in the mud near my bike was big footprints pressed down deep. I didn't recognize them as bear prints but they seemed to be oversized man tracks. I gathered up my stuff and half rode and half ran the mile or so back home! That cured me of wanting to go fishing down there for quite a while.

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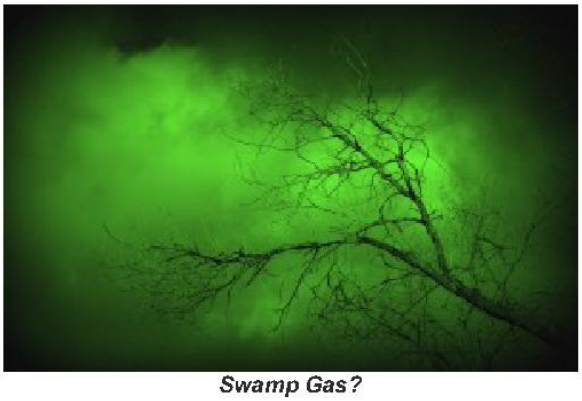

Swamp Gas?

WAS IT SWAMP GAS?

This is my true story. I {Steve Knight, co-author and co-owner of this website and business} can attest to it because this is my personal story. After hanging around the planet over half a century, I've decided to say to hell with what anyone might think or say. I'm telling it like it is. For many years I seldom mentioned this event in my life because of the reaction it received from a sizable percentage of listeners.

At the time, when I was much much younger, I was even accused of being under the influence of drug-induced hallucinations. Let me say now, that it couldn't be further from the truth. I was very young at the time and admittedly a part of the 60's generation who did inhale but rest assured, this was not the circumstance of the incident I am about to relate.

In my 60+ years, I have seen and experienced many strange and bizarre things in various locales around the globe. The events of that night have stuck with me as particularly strange, unexplainable and chillingly vivid. It's almost as though it happened to me yesterday.

South Georgia and North Florida have some very lonely and incredibly dark two-lane highways. I was a young college student at the time, over forty years ago. I had driven to Atlanta for the weekend with my friend John Casbon from Cocoa Beach. We both attended the same small college in northern Florida. John had been visiting a brother in Atlanta and I had been home visiting my family. It was getting late on this last part of the Sunday night return trip, a little after 10 pm. We were not too distant from the Okefenokee Swamp where the road gets terribly lonely and dark with long stretches of nothing but pine trees containing few breaks or clearings for farms or pasture. John was driving and I had been dozing off for an hour or so with my head against the passenger window.

I was startled awake by my friend punching me and saying, "Hey wake up, there's something out there!" Groggily I responded, "What, what's up? What are you talking about?" "There's a light out there and it's following us." John said, pointing in the direction of outside my passenger window. I straightened up in my seat and turned to look out the window. I saw a light off in the distance. "Aw, John it's only a farm house light, did you have to wake me up" I replied grumpily. "No! No! It's not! Just keep looking at it! You'll see! Just look!" he said. Gazing back out the window my back began to stiffen and the hair on the back of my neck stood up as goose pimples covered my whole body. We were speeding at over 75 miles per hour down this highway and the light was not getting any smaller or fading away behind us. Minutes passed and this odd light was staying dead even with us. You could tell the light was traveling at a velocity equal to ours because you could see trees passing in front of and behind the thing as it tracked us, barreling down the highway.

"Holy Shit!" I babbled, "What the hell is this thing!" "I don't know" John answered, "but I've

seen a similar thing like it before. “Once when I was driving a desolate stretch of road near Satellite Beach, a light like this one followed me for awhile and then just disappeared.” he blurted.

My bug eyes were glued to the object as more time passed. Then it really got weird. The light started moving ahead of our car, and then dropping back. It moved ahead then dropped back several times in succession. Then the light seemed to drop farther behind us for a minute or so and then to our amazement it crossed the highway and came up along the opposite side, the driver’s side of the car. All the while we are racing down this road, the only car on the highway, our headlights and this strange luminescence were the only things cutting through the oblivion.

“This is too much!” I exhaled “ We’ve got to find out what this thing is.” “The next clearing or cow pasture we come to, pull over and stop. Let’s see what it is!” As fate would have it, the next clearing was a huge open area in the trees, a vast field of some sort. On the driver’s side, the same side the object was on. The car slowed, rumbling across the highway to the opposite shoulder of the road. The light also slowed with us keeping pace, then stopped in this pasture out in the middle of nowhere. I asked John to turn the car off, which he did.

Now it was quiet, no sound except for the crickets, frogs and other natural night noise. We were both mesmerized by this thing glowing in the distance. We listened for sounds; a hint of something electrical or mechanical there was nothing. We heard no hum, no whine, no motor sounds, absolutely no sound at all emanating from this weird light.

The object itself was an eerie looking triangular glowing shape, having the base of the triangle toward the ground. The glowing triangle seemed to pulsate almost like a beating heart with pulsating white and purplish light instead of blood. It was extremely hard to calculate the size of this thing, because it seemed to be only light. It could have been small, the size of a VW Beetle, or it could have been large, the size of a house. We couldn’t tell.

I do remember staring in amazement at the ground underneath this thing. I think it was the dew on the grass. It was sparkling. You could see all these reflections, a sort of purplish white light twinkling off the dewdrops on the grass. What a sight, we were speechless staring at this thing as the minutes ticked by. I was sprawled over John in the drivers seat the both of us transfixed out the window. Then it started to move. It seemed to move right towards us, or maybe was growing in size. Like I’ve said, it was very hard to define because it was light. It really seemed to be coming towards us.

Abruptly, John said, “Whoa! That’s enough! I’m out a here.” He pushed me aside, turned the key and the car’s engine coughed to life, he gunned it and we peeled dirt and grass back on to the highway. I was shocked and disappointed because I didn’t get to see what would happen. At that particular moment I did not want to deal with John who had made a very firm decision to get out of there.

Now we were back on the road, rocketing down the highway at over 80 mph, still being shadowed by the glowing triangle. Exasperated, John rasped “ We’ve got to tell someone about this. Call somebody or something.”

I was somewhat familiar with the highway from previous trips and vaguely remembered a cross roads with a gas station up ahead a few miles. “Lets try to make a phone call from the gas station when we get there.” I told him. Minutes later, we came up on the cross roads with the gas station, it was closed of course. There was a house back behind the station and you could see someone had a light on but more importantly, we spied a pay phone at the intersection. We pulled up to the phone and parked, our eyes still trained on this incredible light that had been following us. The light seemed to be much further away now and was looking more like a low star twinkling thru the trees.

We decided to call the house where I was living because I had several roommates and we might possibly convince one of them to come investigate. We put money in the coin phone, dialed the number and one of my roommates answered “Hello.” I started talking to him but got only a “Hello” “Hello!” “Hello!” The roommate then hung up, he couldn’t hear me. This was too strange. We decided to get the operator to place the call. She did so and as soon as the call went through, we lost sight of the object. We never saw it again.

My roommates and others ridiculed us mercilessly about our experience but we both knew what happened out there that night.

I have lost touch with John. I had a chance meeting with an In-Law of John’s six or seven years ago who told me he was in New Orleans and was some sort of politician.

This weird event touched me. I’ve always been curious about what it all meant. I have not had another encounter like it in the years since.

Not being a writer, please forgive my grammar transgressions.

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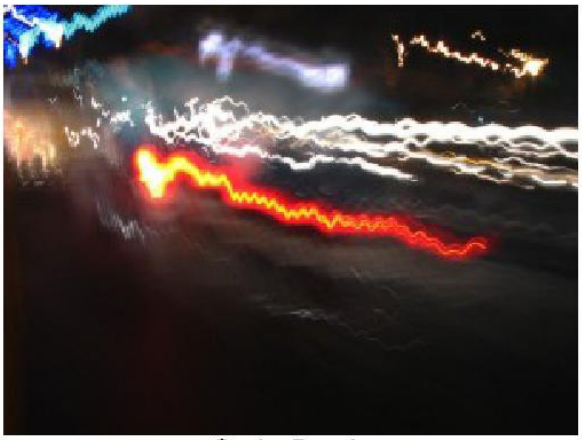

Snake Parade

AN OKEFENOKEE “JACK-O-MY-LANTERN”

Hamp Mizell an old time resident and an extraordinary storyteller of the Okefenokee, tells of an experience he had one night in the swamp seeing a light on the side of the road. He said it looked like a burning stump floating in the air through trees. He called it Jack-O-My-Lantern.

“It wasn’t no moving light, but I’ll tell you what it done. I’d been hunting with a chum of mine, and one of my dogs follered him when he went home. And a day or two later I went after him. Got on a horse and went in the night. In turning back, I saw something right aside the road. I thought it was a stump burning. It looked like a big ball of firecoal a-shining. But I knew there was no fire there when I went along, and it hadn’t been long. It was right in front of an old house that

had been standing there for years without anybody finishing building it. But when I got near enough, within about twenty-five feet of it, it just disappeared. I was intending to investigate it. I've always made it a rule to investigate anything I seen. I don't believe in haints—don't believe in witchery."

The "Swamp Talk" Glossary talks about "jack-o-my-lantern" as being an unidentified spherical light, hovering above the ground and visible only at night. Lang Johns saw one near an Indian mound on Bugaboo Island. The observance of this phenomenon is thought to be the same as other similar sightings referred to as "Swamp Gas" or "Will-O-The-Wisp" or "Foxfire."

The above story was taken from "OKEFENOKEE ALBUM" Authored by Francis Harper and Delma E. Presley, The University of Georgia Press.

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A CLASSIC UFO SIGHTING

An unusual UFO was sighted on the east side of the swamp in May 1998, the description varies. The sighting was observed over a several mile area in a north to south direction. The editor of a local newspaper gave a brief description of the UFO in an editorial. The UFO was described as a large shiny black object, which hovered for some time then, broke apart into quite a few smaller objects, which flew, away in different directions. A certified UFO investigating team investigated the sightings. The results of this investigation are unavailable to us at this time. Update 2009: Still no plausible explanation has ever been given for this sighting.

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Alien Abduction

ALIEN ABDUCTION

In early 1996, a former Everglades National Park Ranger on a vacation from upstate New York visited Okefenokee's West side for canoeing and bird watching.He put his canoe in at Stephen Foster Park and paddled over to Billy's Island. He did not return to the Park, his canoe was found that evening on Billy's Island. Federal, state and local officials immediately started a search, which escalated over the next few days and weeks, to an extremely extensive search for the man.

Exhaustive searches of Billy's Island were conducted, hand to hand searches combing the entire Island, turned up nothing. Bloodhounds were brought in, the hounds could not pick up a scent beyond a small loop, they turned up nothing. Heat seeking infrared helicopters were brought in, sensitive

enough to identify small animals this man weighed over 300lbs, they turned up nothing. Cadaver sniffing dogs were brought in , they turned up nothing.

All hope was almost given up until one day some 40+ days after the disappearance, a bedraggled man was seen by a boater leaning against a tree near the waters edge on Billy's Island. A day after this sighting, a dazed man identified himself to some passing canoeists as the missing man.

He was brought to a local hospital in a confused and disoriented state. He was not very informative as to what happened to him. The man insisted that he had been on the Island wandering aimlessly the whole time, living off the land. Billy's Island is a small well used island, federal, state and local officials involved in the searches do not buy his story.

The man has never publicly stated he was abducted. Speculation around the swamp is that he was taken without his knowledge from the island and then returned sometime after the search had been scaled down, with his memory seemingly erased . A classic UFO abduction.

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Dailyshoot 2011~vertical lines ~trees to the sky!

BRIGHT LIGHTS, BIG SWAMP, A UFO or SWAMP GAS

This information about a very nearby sighting was sent to Okefenokee X-Files from a respected source . I have lived in the area all my life except for a few years in the military. About 15 or so years ago, I was dating a girl who lived about a mile from the swamp entrance. I stayed over at her house till near midnight one night, watching for falling stars during a meteor shower. As it was a moonlit night and the road out to the main highway was white sand, I was idling along with no lights on trying to catch a glimpse of any falling stars. I hadn't gone very far when something very strange happened. I saw a very bright white light about the size of a basketball and as bright as a vapor lamp flying through the pine trees ahead of me and to my right. It seemed to be moving about 60 miles an hour and was maybe 6 or 7 feet off the ground. I thought it was going to come out of the woods right on top of me and I hit my brakes. As soon as I hit my brakes it was as if it saw my brake lights and it immediately went back the way it had come. It didn't seem to turn around but simply reversed direction in an instant. I then turned my lights on bright and drove about 90 mph to my home. I later went back to see if maybe I had somehow seen a car's headlights or a streetlamp or something. I determined that the woods were too thick and the highway and nearest streetlamp were much too far away. I still don't know what it was that I saw, but it was very startling to say the least.

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More Ghostly Tales

Some of the following stories are from "Weird Georgia" by Author Jim Miles. These stories relating to the Okefenokee are only a smattering of the "good stuff" contained in his book. ~ Okefenokee X Files

Historical Portrait Figure of Hernando Cortez Spanish conqueror of the Aztec civilization by artist-historian George S Stuart (1)

GEORGIA GIANTS IN THE EARTH

Local legend around the Okefenokee Swamp Area of Georgia and Florida holds that Spanish explorers who ventured into the vast area swore the forests turned into giant warriors who launched showers of arrows at them. Today phantom deer, bears, and panthers that can only be killed by special bullets roam the islands at night, and on stormy nights ghost slave ships slip up the Saint Mary's River amid sounds of clanking chains that can be clearly heard by observers. Skeleton crews sail the boats up this winding waterway to unload their forbidden cargo on isolated sandbars.

During the 1920s a railroad was built to transport lumber out of the swamp. While crossing Floyd's Island, the largest in the swamp, it became necessary to cut through an extensive half-moon-shaped Indian mound. Within it workers found the skeletons of several giant sized men accompanied by pottery and beads.

Tom Chesser, who owned *Chesser Island* in Charlton County, had a sizable mound in his backyard. In 1969 he told the Atlanta Journal and Constitution Magazine that a professor from a northern university hired him to excavate the mound in the 1920s. They discovered thirteen skeletons in all.

"Some of the skeletons were crossed," Chesser said, "one on top of the other. Some were face down. All of them were perfect when they were first discovered. Teeth even still had some glaze on them, but when air struck, it crumbled them. They were giants. Those Jawbones would go over my whole face."

Chesser Island is now a part of the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge. The Chesser homestead is a part of the Refuge System's Heritage Preservation program. The Indian Mound referred to along with an informational kiosk containing more information on these Gigantic pre-Georgians is located on the grounds of the Chesser Homestead. *Chesser Island* can be visited only from the East Entrance to Okefenokee, located directly across from Okefenokee Pastimes, host of this website.

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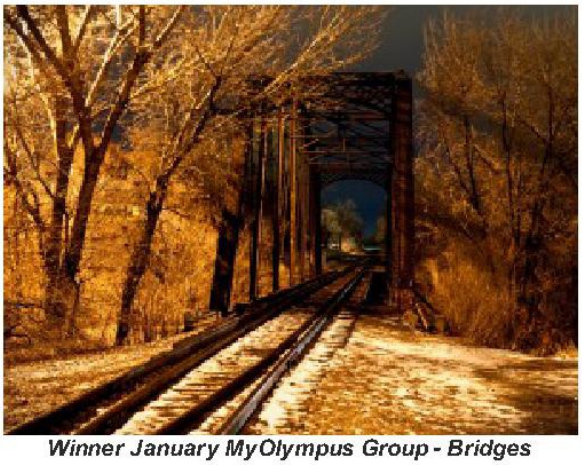
A HEADLESS GHOST

An Okefenokee area ghost tradition, this one dating to the 1930s, owes its existence to the railroad. A man fishing along the tracks at Henson Creek, near Manor, fell asleep one night



Winner January MyOlympus Group - Bridges

with the rails as his pillow. A train appeared, sounding its whistle frantically, but there was no response. Steel wheels kept on rolling, and the fisher person was high landered.

Now for a twist. The legend is that the body can be seen walking the rails at night swinging a phantom lantern in search of its head. Kevin Dial claims that his grandfather went in search of the "shade" one night. Sure enough, it approached, solid white and six feet tall, walking directly toward Gramps, who fired a futile shot before fleeing.

Okefenokee X files wishes to thank the author and publisher of "Weird Georgia" for the contributions.

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Autumn Aubusson

A CURSE AND THE HANGMAN'S OAK

Trader's Hill was a flourishing port for water trade in the frontier southeastern region. This small outpost community, compared to the surrounding settlements of the time, was an active metropolis. Begun as a trading post in 1755, the village, about five miles south of Folkston, Ga. survived until the early 1900's on the river that once separated the royal colony of Georgia from the Spanish holdings and the Seminole nations to the south.

At the end of Main Street stood a huge, old oak, "The Hangman's Oak" of Trader's Hill. It was said the old oak could tell story upon story of mysterious events around the riverbank village. In the autumn of 1840, this massive tree played a major role in a mysterious drama, as reported by Troy Jones in the Charlton County Herald.

An elderly Indian, named Suanee, accused of stealing some goods from the general store and of killing the owner, had been captured and placed in the town jail. If he escaped he could swim thirty yards to safety; therefore he was well guarded. Escape into Florida from Trader's Hill was frequently "made good" since the Saint Mary's River is only a short distance and very narrow at this point.

Suanee had prepared for this day. His grandfather, for whom the river Suwannee was named, it is said, had told him to starve himself until he could easily slip through the cell bars if he should ever become a prisoner of the white man. This he did. But his feebleness would not allow the old warrior freedom.

A speedy trial and he was carried to the huge oak for execution. When the noose was placed

around his neck. The Indian prayed; he then lifted his head and spoke, “May the curse of my father’s spirit and mine be placed among the people as long as there is a Trader’s Hill.” Not paying any heed to the defiant old warrior, the people, after hanging him, went on about their way. But all was not settled.

One night as the villagers were attending a county dance, a bright light cast its beam in the eyes of the merrymakers; astonished, they looked toward this phenomenon. The gleam came from the oak. Accompanying the glow, a low moan whined throughout the countryside. Immediately, so writes Jones, people began to leave their homes and Trader’s Hill.

Some who visit the lonely ridge today assert that on certain nights the light can still be seen and the distant sound of moaning is still heard.

The above story was taken from the book “This Magic Wilderness” authored by Robert Latimer Hurst.

and some More Ghostly Tales as reported to the Okefenokee X Files

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227e in the golden grove

GHOST SPIRIT SIGHTINGS

A log cabin on Okefenokee’s East Side by an area called Camp Cornelia on Trail Ridge is where this haunting took place in the early 1990’s. A former Refuge volunteer, who resided in the cabin, reported strange visitations of Spirits. The Spirits were Native American Indians in full regalia. These spirits were not aware of the walls and boundaries of the cabin, but seemed attached to the land the cabin was on. They seemingly went about their daily tribal existence without concern.

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What I Choose

SPECTRES OF THE SWAMP SIGHTING

This one was reported in January 1998 on Trail Ridge, the ancient geological feature which makes up the eastern boundary of the swamp. A traveler on vacation and hiking near the boardwalk area was surprised by the sound of drums in the distant piney woods. Native American spectres carrying objects and walking swiftly in a single file line were sighted off in the distance heading south on the ridge. The vacationer did not linger long to watch the procession. He reported no sense of hostility, but felt uneasy as if he was seeing something he

Leitchfield is in Grayson County, not too far from Elizabethtown. Just outside of town limits, on Bloomington road as it crosses over Bear creek, stands the old iron bridge. As they flow under this bridge at midnight, the waters of the creek turn blood red in memory of a horrible crime committed there many years ago.

It was on the old iron bridge that one dark night a young woman threw her newborn baby into the cold waters of the creek below. She may have been young and unmarried and afraid to face the shame of the community, she may have been so poor that she knew she couldn't afford to fed the child, whatever her reasons for abandoning her baby to the icy river, she immediately regretted her decision. She died of grief and regret not long after.

Ever since then, ghostly encounters have been reported by people crossing the ridge. It's said that if you stand on the bridge at midnight, you can hear the sound of a baby crying. And if you look down into the creek below, for a minute the waters will turn a deep, blood red.

It's also said that you can see the ghost of the young woman wandering through the woods near the bridge, searching for her lost child. The ghost is reported to appear in the form of a white, translucent figure, dressed in clothes from about a century ago.

The ghost is even said to occasionally approach people walking across the bridge. People have reported that they've felt a cold tap on the shoulder as they cross the bridge at night. Turning around, they'll find themselves face-to-face with the pale, transparent, horribly sad face of a young woman.

"Have you seen my baby?" the ghost will ask, and when the shocked traveller says no, she will only sadly disappear into the darkness.

The old iron bridge is a sad, lonely place, haunted by painful memories. Even those who don't see the spirit or hear the sound of the crying baby report that the place is unnaturally cold, and there's an uncomfortable feeling of sadness that seems to fill the air around the bridge.

Perhaps one day the poor lost soul will be reunited with her child, and find some peace. Until that day, look for her wandering the woods in Grayson County by the old iron bridge.

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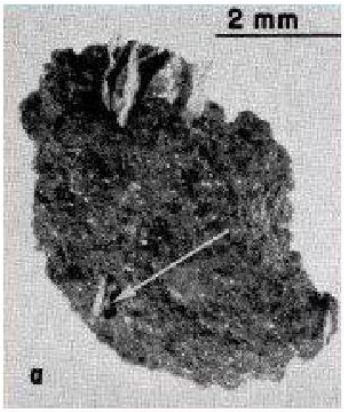
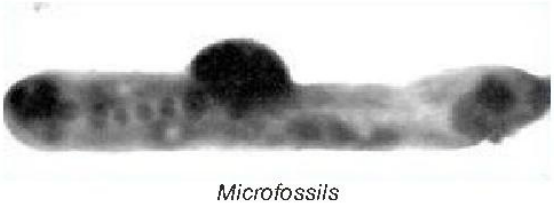


Seed capsules embedded within an Orgueil meteorite fragment (arrow points to stem)

On May 14, 1864 a meteor shower fell in southern France, near the town of Peillerot. The meteorites, which were composed of carbonaceous chondrite, were given the name 'Orgueil.' Samples of the meteor shower were collected and sent to the Musée d'Histoire Naturelle in Montauban, France. From there the meteorites were disseminated to other museums throughout Europe, but two of the meteorites remained in Montauban, where they were sealed inside a glass jar.

Evidence of Extraterrestrial Life?



Microfossils

Electron microscope photo of a possible microfossil contained in the Orgueil meteorite, discovered by VanLandingham and Tan in 1966.

The Orgueil meteorites remained all but forgotten until the early 1960s, when researcher Bart Nagy examined samples of them and found curious microscopic patterns that resembled lifelike fossils. He published his work in *Nature,* touching off a debate that continues to this day concerning whether any meteorites contain evidence of fossilized microscopic life.

Nagy's work inspired other researchers to look more closely at other samples of Orgueil, and when they did, they found something even more remarkable. A team of Chicago researchers found plant fragments (entire seeds) and coal embedded deep inside one of the meteorites that had been sealed inside a glass jar and stored in the museum at Montauban.

The researchers immediately suspected the plant and coal fragments had somehow gotten attached to the meteorite and were not actually a true part of it. But x-ray analysis ruled this suspicion out. The plant fragments were definitely embedded in the substance of the meteorite itself. Furthermore, the entire meteorite was covered in a glassy fusion layer created by the heat of passing through the atmosphere. Plant seeds should not have been able to penetrate this layer. This raised the intriguing possibility that the plant seeds were an extraterrestrial life form.

The Hoax Debunked

The researchers soon ruled out the possibility that the plant seeds were extraterrestrial when they identified them as belonging to a rush indigenous to southern France. This left only one explanation for how the seeds had gotten inside the meteorite: human intervention.

Orgueil grows extremely soft and clay-like when it comes into contact with water. Therefore, the researchers theorized that if someone had wet the rock, they could have then inserted the plant fragments inside of it, where they would have remained once the meteorite had dried.

There was one problem with this hypothesis. If the meteorite had been soaked, manipulated, and then dried, why did it still have a glassy fusion layer? This question was answered when further tests on the rock revealed that this fusion layer was actually dried glue. They found pieces of the original fusion layer jammed within the meteorite.

It became obvious that around 1864, before the meteorite had been sealed inside the glass jar, someone had gone to great pains first to embed plant and coal fragments inside of it, and then to coat it with glue to make it appear to have a fusion crust once again.

Motive

Why had someone gone to such pains to tamper with the meteorite? The answer was not clear, but the researchers suggested that the historical context of scientific debate in France in 1864 could offer an explanation.

In 1864 a major focus of scientific debate concerned the possibility of spontaneous generation. This was the idea that life can spontaneously come into existence inside of inanimate substances. On April 7, 1864 Louis Pasteur delivered a famous lecture at the Sorbonne debunking this concept.

On May 31, shortly after this lecture, another French scientist, Cloëz, examined samples of the Orgueil meteor shower and detected in it the presence of materials resembling humic acid. He suggested that this implied the existence of life on the meteorite's parent body.

It could be that someone decided to play a joke on the French scientists by placing plant and coal fragments inside of the meteorite, hoping the fragments would soon be found and interpreted as evidence of spontaneous generation within the meteorite.

If this is the case, then the carefully planned hoax backfired, because the meteorite was sealed inside a glass jar and forgotten until 1962, almost a century later.

Even though one of the Orgueil meteorites had obviously been tampered with, the researchers stressed that this did not have any bearing on whether the other Orgueil meteorites contained microfossils. That debate continues to this day.

- Edward Anders, Eugene R. DuFresne,Ryoichi Hayatsu, Albert Cavaille, Ann DuFresne, and Frank W. Fitch. "Contaminated Meteorite," *Science,* New Series, Volume 146, Issue 3648 (Nov.27, 1964), 1157-1161.

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Photo Source : Rob Gower

If you've been to the world's best bungee jumping sites, why not try to get to the sport's birthplace? Go to Pentecost Island in Vanuatu and see how the men do it with their extreme sport that they call "*naghol*" which is also known as land diving.

Photo Source : Rob Gower

Legend says that this jumping festival is about a woman who ran away from her abusive husband. She hid behind a tree. The husband, who chased her, begged her to say sorry and return, warning her that he might beat her more. So the woman refused and climbed towards the top of the tree. Her husband followed and when he almost reached the top, the woman jumped. The man jumped after her but he realized that his wife tied vines around her ankles that made her survive the jump. The man on the other hand, was unlucky and died from the fall.

Photo Source : Fest300archive

From this legend, the men of Vanuatu nowadays jump from towers to show women that they can't be tricked again. They tie vines around their ankles and jump off the tall wooden towers that can reach up to 20-30 meters.

They do *naghol* on Saturdays between April and June every year. On every jump, they make sure that they'll touch the ground to ensure a good yam harvest for the following year. Moreover, the ritual is also done to show a male's acceptance into manhood and fertility.

Land divings are done on a giant bungee tower with five levels made out of native wood, tied securely with ropes out of liana vines. It is situated on a slight slope and the ground on the

Photo Source : Fest300archive

Photo Source : Kenneth Hoyumpa

front is freshly-tilled to help break the fall of the jumpers.

You can reach the naghol spot just by doing a short, easy trek through the forest in Pentecost Island. Once you're there you can enjoy watching the men do the scary jump and spend time after in village celebrations that include music, dance, and good food that you can share with the successful jumpers.

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The Louisville Palace Theater on Fourth Street in Louisville is a stunning example of the golden age of American movie palace. The theater first opened in 1928 as Loew's Theater, the building was designed by famed stage designer and theater architect John Eberson. Eberson, who designed theaters across the Southeast and Midwest, created stunning, sumptuous atmospheric theaters, built to create the experience of magic and luxury for the patrons. Costing the staggering, for 1928, sum of over a million dollars to build, the theater was the gem of Louisville's theater row. It also is said to be the one of one of Kentucky's friendlier ghosts.

Loew's Theater went along through the ups and down of the American movie theater business through the course of the 20th Century. The theater was renovated several times, changed ownership multiple times, and finally succumbed to the pressure of multiplexes and the changing, more blockbuster-focused movie business in 1978. After operating as nightclub for a period in the 1980s, the theater was taken under the wing of new owners who lovingly restored it to its original glory, and it now operates as a movie palace and concert venue.

In the 1990s, workers restoring the theater began to report encounters with the spectral figure of an older man with a flat-top haircut, dressed in older work clothes, and wearing thick-rimmed glasses. The workers reported that the figure appeared to take an interest in their work, peering down off the balcony to see what they were doing and quietly watching from the shadows.

One worker, who had been putting in long hours in the rush for the grand re-opening, was painting the ceiling, lying on a high scaffold, when he felt the long hours getting to him and he quietly fell asleep. The man was surprised to hear a voice speaking into this ear, saying "Wake up!", and when he did he was surprised to see that he had nearly rolled off the scaffold in his sleep. Te ghostly voice had saved his life.

The ghost persists in the theater to this day, quietly overseeing the theater. So who is this mysterious figure? During the 1960s, the theater was managed by a man named Fred Fisch. Fisch's grandson heard about the ghost and supplied a picture of his grandfather to the theater staff. Everyone was amazed, the man in the picture was the same man that many people had seen around the theater, down to the flat-top haircut and glasses.

So Fred remains a welcome and friendly presence in the Louisville Palace Theater. Keep an eye open for him the next time you see a show there.

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A news report that appeared in the *Territorial Enterprise* (Virginia City, Nevada's leading newspaper) on October 4, 1862 described the bizarre discovery of a petrified human body.:

A petrified man was found some time ago in the mountains south of Gravelly Ford. Every limb and feature of the stony mummy was perfect, not even excepting the left leg, which has evidently been a wooden one during the lifetime of the owner - which lifetime, by the way, came to a close about a century ago, in the opinion of a savan who has examined the defunct. The body was in a sitting posture, and leaning against a huge mass of croppings; the attitude was pensive, the right thumb resting against the side of the nose; the left thumb partially supported the chin, the fore-finger pressing the inner corner of the left eye and drawing it partly open; the right eye was closed, and the fingers of the right hand spread apart. This strange freak of nature created a profound sensation in the vicinity, and our informant states that by request, Justice Sewell or Sowell, of Humboldt City, at once proceeded to the spot and held an inquest on the body. The verdict of the jury was that "deceased came to his death from protracted exposure," etc. The people of the neighborhood volunteered to bury the poor unfortunate, and were even anxious to do so; but it was discovered, when they attempted to remove him, that the water which had dripped upon him for ages from the crag above, had coursed down his back and deposited a limestone sediment under him which had glued him to the bed rock upon which he sat, as with a cement of adamant, and Judge S. refused to allow the charitable citizens to blast him from his position. The opinion expressed by his Honor that such a course would be little less than sacrilege, was eminently just and proper. Everybody goes to see the stone man, as many as three hundred having visited the hardened creature during the past five or six weeks.

Illustration of the Petrified Man from 1882 edition of Twain's *Sketches, New and Old*.
Note the position of the Petrified Man's hands.

It was a fascinating little blurb. So fascinating that many other papers soon reprinted it. However, not a word of it was true. It had been written by a young man named Samuel Clemens (better known later as Mark Twain) who was a new employee of the *Territorial Enterprise*. (He had arrived in Nevada in 1861 hoping to make his fortune as a miner, but having failed at that endeavor, accepted a job at the newspaper.)

Twain later admitted that he was surprised at how many people were fooled by his story. It was his first attempt at a hoax, and when he penned it he had considered it "a string of

roaring absurdities." But once he realized how well his deception had succeeded, he admitted feeling a "soothing secret satisfaction."

His intention in writing it had been two-fold. First, he wanted to poke fun at the many petrification stories that were all the rage at the time. He later wrote:

"One could scarcely pick up a paper without finding in it one or two glorified discoveries of this kind. The mania was becoming a little ridiculous. I was a brand-new local editor in Virginia City, and I felt called upon to destroy this growing evil; we all have our benignant, fatherly moods at one time or another, I suppose. I chose to kill the petrifaction mania with a delicate, a very delicate satire."

Of course, his satire didn't exactly work, since most people failed to recognize it as satire. Indeed, he was later "stunned to see the creature I had begotten to pull down the wonder-business with, and bring derision upon it, calmly exalted to the grand chief place in the list of the genuine marvels our Nevada had produced."

His second motive was to mock a local politician, Judge Sewall, whom he considered to be a bit of a pompous fool. He explained, "I had had a temporary falling out with Mr. — —, the new coroner and justice of the peace of Humboldt, and thought I might as well touch him up a little at the same time and make him ridiculous, and thus combine pleasure with business."

For months the hoax continued to spread, appearing in newspaper after newspaper around the world. According to Twain, it even graced the pages of the *London Lancet*. Twain mischievously sent Sewall copies of all the papers that it appeared in:

"I think that for about eleven months, as nearly as I can remember, Mr.— —'s daily mail-bag continued to be swollen by the addition of half a bushel of newspapers hailing from many climes with the Petrified Man in them, marked around with a prominent belt of ink. I sent them to him. I did it for spite, not for fun. He used to shovel them into his back yard and curse."

Twain noted that the Petrified Man article did contain one prominent clue that, for careful readers, should have identified it immediately as a farce. Note the position of the Petrified Man's hands. They're arranged in a gesture of ridicule. But the gesture was too obliquely described. Twain admitted, "I was too ingenious. I mixed it up rather too much; and so all that description of the attitude, as a key to the humbuggery of the article, was entirely lost, for nobody but me ever discovered and comprehended the peculiar and suggestive position of the petrified man's hands."

- Fedler, Fred. Media Hoaxes. Iowa State University Press, 1989: 43-44.
- The Works of Mark Twain; Early Tales & Sketches. Vol. 1. 1851-1864. University of California Press, 1979: 159.
- Paine, Albert Bigelow. Mark Twain. Vol.1. Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1912: 211.
- Mark Twain, "The Petrified Man" in Sketches New and Old, The American Publishing Company, 1882.

One of the most bizarre ghost stories in Kentucky comes from the quiet township of Happy Hollow, located in Green County in the southwest corner of the state. The story of this bizarre and unsettling apparition has mystified generations of Kentuckians, as no one can seem to understand why it happens or what it means.

The story begins in 1932, when the Ragland family was living in a small farmhouse in Happy Hollow. It was a hot summer night, and as the sun was setting the family was gathered outside on the lawn. The adults were quietly talking among themselves as the children chased fireflies in the yard. It was a moonless night. A light had been left burning in the kitchen, and that bright square was the only source of light in the growing darkness. It seemed like just another uneventful evening, until the youngest girl in the family suddenly stopped playing, pointed, and said "Mamma, who is that in the kitchen?"

Not thinking much of it, Mrs. Ragland turned around to glance in the winnow. She was in no way expecting the bizarre, unsettling spectacle that greeted her through the window.

Standing in the family kitchen were four skeletally thin men, with pale faces and, long unkempt hair, hanging in tangles from beneath high top hats. They were all dressed in thick, black mourning suits that looked nearly a century out of fashion. Between them, the four men were holding up a large, black coffin, whose finely polished brass handles and hinged gleamed in the light. Most bizarrely, on top of the coffin was a tiny baby lamb, although the creature was far too small to a living lamb, it was very clearly moving its head and hooves.

Mrs. Ragland screamed for her husband, and with his oldest son right behind him, Mr.Ragland rushed into he house. But when they arrived in the kitchen, the apparition had vanished.

Understandably disturbed,, the family gathered together back outside. As they warily discussed what they had just seen, they heard the unsettling sound of a lamb bleating as the same apparition reappeared. One again, it disappeared as soon as the men rushed inside the house.

Not knowing what else to do, the family called the county sheriff, who arrived at the home and fund the family genuinely frightened and confused. The sheriff looked around, but the apparition didn't appear to him. He could find no evidence of a prank being played, or even any evidence of how someone could pull of such a complex illusion.

Many people in Kentucky believe that seeing an apparition is a sure sign that someone in the family will die soon. The Raglands were understandably nervous over the next few months, but the family's life continued as normal. Whatever significance the apparition seemed to have, it would remain part of the mystery.

The four ghostly pallbearers and the unreasonably small lamb would continue to appear to

the Ragland family over the years, and when they eventually sold the house and moved away the haunting company remained behind. Residents in the house and others have seen the apparition over the years, always on hot summer nights and always when there is no moon.

The phantom pallbearers of Happy Hollow remain an inexplicable mystery. If they are ghosts attempting to communicate from beyond the grave, their message is not being understood. If they are some kind of supernatural creature or force, why they would come all the way into this world only to carry a coffin and a lamb is puzzling. But if you happen by Happy Hollow on a monocles summer night and happen to be glancing in the right window, there's a chance you could become part of the mystery.

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Tuesday, January 03, 2006

The Phrenologist Grave Robber

South Bend, Ind., 1879 or 1880

Fred Auer, a farmer, finds a human jaw bone, leading to an examination of the nearby cometary where a desecrated grave is discovered. The body remains, but the head is gone from the grave.

Suspicion falls on Gordon Truesdale. Truesdale is a "handsome, broad-shouldered fellow with a fair education, but lazy and shiftless", whose passion is phrenology, the now-discredited belief that a person's character is revealed by the shape and bumps of one's head. His desire to own his own skull collection is well known among his neighbors.

Truesdale has recently been to a doctor. He asked the doctor an odd question: can a man contract a disease from corpses. When the doctor answered in the affirmative, Truesdale was visibly shaken.

Shortly after his doctor visit, Truesdale complains to his wife that his nose is painful. Self-medication fails, and in a few days his face and head have swollen to twice their normal size and "lost all semblence of human shape." His lips draw away from his teeth and his eyes are "swollen almost to bursting from their sockets" and "turned in pain".

The doctor is called in and he makes several incisions in Truesdale's face. The result is horrible to contemplate: "there oozed a mass of loathsome, detestable putrescence, so terrible in its stench that the attendants, save one" run out of the house. When the facial incisions are washed, the water pours out of holes in the scalp.

The doctor tells Truesdale that he doesn't have long to live and Truesdale confesses to his wife that he is the grave robber. He says he dug to the head of the coffin, broke it open, and, taking a knife, cut around the corpse's neck. Putting his foot on the corpse's chest, he took the "head in his hands" and "pulled and jerked and twisted it until it came off by mere force." He says that the corpse's skull can be found under some straw in the barn, and it is soon returned to the family of the departed.

Truesdale's death three days later is hideous. During his final days the odor is tremendous and can't be washed from the attendents' hands. His breath is so horrible that when one of the attendants holds his hands near Truesdale's mouth it stings "like hundreds of nettles".

Truesdale's burial is as sickening as his death. Nobody will touch the body, so they lift him using the bedsheets, dump him into his coffin, and screw the lid tight. Before a wagon can be brought, Truesdale's corpse swells and bursts the coffin lid. The lid is strapped on, only to burst again at the graveyard, where the whole mess is dumped into a grave and hurriedly covered over.

The stench lingers in the house for days. One of the attendants is quoted as saying, "It still seems as if you could cut the air in that house with a knife."

Written by Bob Rogers

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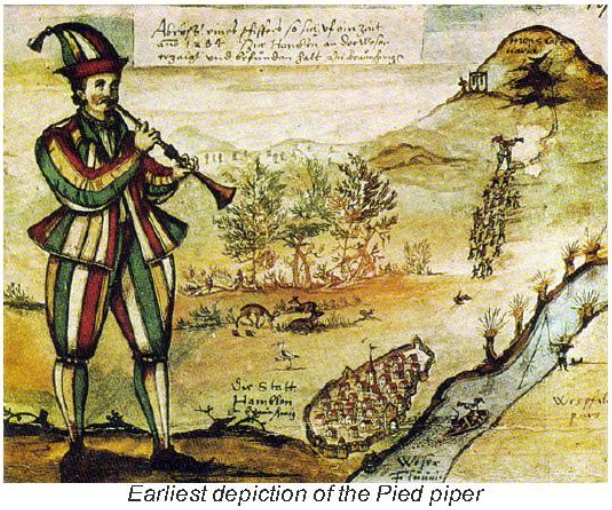
The Pied Piper of Hamelin: A Medieval Mass Abduction?

By
Medievalists.net
– December 7, 2014**Posted in:** Features

What really happened on June 26, 1284, in the German town of Hamelin? Over the centuries the legend of the Pied Piper has grown and has been recounted in countless books and movies. However, it is possible that this fanciful tale of a piper leading rats, then children, out of a town, may have been based on a real and shocking event.



Earliest depiction of the Pied piper

There are only a few pieces of evidence about what might have occurred in Hamelin, a town in northern Germany. A stained glass window, which was made around the year 1300 and kept until the 17th century in the town's Market Church seems to allude to an event where children were in danger. It is not until the year 1384 that we get a more firm report, this one from the town's chronicle. The entry for that year states: "It is 100 years since our children left."

Our next reference comes from a Latin chronicle from the German town of Lunenberg. While the chronicle was written in the fourteenth-century, it seems that someone added an extra page of text between 1430 and 1450. It states:

Here follows a marvellous wonder, which transpired in the town of Hamelin in the diocese of Minden, in the Year of Our Lord, 1284, on the Feast of Saints John and Paul. A certain young man thirty years of age, handsome and well-dressed, so that all who saw him admired him because of his appearance, crossed the bridges and entered the town by the West Gate. He then began to play all through the town a silver pipe of the most magnificent sort. All the children who heard his pipe, in the number of 130, followed him to the East Gate and out of the town to the so-called execution place or Calvary. There they proceeded to vanish, so that no trace of them could be found. The mothers of the children ran from town to town, but they found nothing. It is written: A voice was heard from on high, and a mother was bewailing her son. And as one counts the years according to the Year of Our Lord or according to the first, second or third year of an anniversary, so do the people in Hamelin reckon the years after the departure and disappearance of their children. This report I found in an old book. And the mother of the deacon Johann von Lude saw the children depart.

In the sixteenth-century we begin to get more accounts of the events in Hamelin. In 1553 the chronicle for the town of Bamberg offered the first German-language report:

There is also a mountain which lies approximately a rifle shot away from this town, called Calvary, and the townspeople say that in 1283 a man was seen possibly a musician, wearing clothing of many colors and possessing a pipe, which he played in the town. Whereupon the children in the town ran out as far as the mountain, and there they all disappeared into it. Only two children returned home, and they were naked; one was blind and the other mute. But when the women began to look for their children, the man said to them that he would come again in 300 years and take more children. 130 children had been lost and the people of this place were afraid that the same man would come again in 1583.

Twelve years later, the *Zimmer Chronicle*, written by Count Froben Christoph von Zimmer of Swabia, expands the story with the inclusion of rats:

Since I am again returning to matters concerning rats, I cannot neglect to mention a miracle of God, which in identical form was reported many years ago in the town of Hamelin in Westphalia concerning the banishment of rats; which story, because of its unusual nature, is definitely worth remembering, and there to conclude, that the Almighty created some odd creatures, without instilling in them human reason.

Several hundred years ago the inhabitants of the town of Hamelin in Westphalia were plagued with such a large quantity of rats, that it became unbearable. It so happened that a foreigner, an unknown or traveller, much as the travelling students of long ago, came into town. Hearing the troubles and complaints of burghers, he proposed whether they would consider a reward for him if he were to remove the rats from the town. They were overjoyed with such news and for his offer they promised to pay him a sum of several hundred guilders. With that he went through the town with a little pipe, which he then placed to his mouth and commenced to play. Immediately all the rats in the town came running out of the houses and in unbelievable numbers began to follow his feet as he walked out of the town. He banished them to the nearest mountain and no more rats were seen in the town. This accomplished, he demanded his promised reward. But they had hidden it away, confessing that although they had been in agreement with the sum, that since the matter had caused him no difficulty, but rather he had dispensed with his task so easily, not by hard work, but by an unusual art; therefore, they felt that he should not ask for so much, but lower his sights and take less. The stranger, however, insisted on keeping the original agreement and he persisted in seeking the sum promised him, and if they didn't give it to him they would rue it. The townspeople, however, stayed with the opinion that this was far too much money, and they no longer wished to give it to him. When he realize that he was not going to receive anything, the stranger began to walk through the streets with his pipe as before. There the majority of the children in the town under the age congregated, and they followed at his feet and out of the town to the nearest mountain. The mountain miraculously opened up and the stranger and

the children went inside. Immediately afterwards it closed up again and neither stranger nor children were ever seen again. Now there was great wailing throughout the town and the people could do nothing but commit themselves to God and admit their guilt. The town reported this wondrous story in all its correspondence as an eternal reminder and added the right number on the date according to the birth of Christ; on the end, however, they added to the departure of the children in such and such a year.

It is difficult to piece together any logical story from these accounts, but one can note that the people of Hamelin had a strong belief that children from their town disappeared in the year 1284. In fact, even in the 16th century they would note this event, such as when a new gate was built along the town walls. At this gate they inscribed the following message: "In the year 1556, 272 years after the magician led 130 children out of the town, this portal was erected."

In *The Pied Piper: A Handbook*, Wolfgang Mieder provides translations of the various historical accounts of the Pied Piper story, as well as looks at the explanations given to what might have actually happened. Some theories suggest that these children had taken part in the Children's Crusade or were victims of the Black Death. Some historians believe the story might have originated with young men from Hamelin who were killed at the Battle of Sedemunder in 1259. A more recent theory proposes that these were young people (not necessarily children) who were recruited to move east to Transylvania – in the second half of the thirteenth century many Germans were being persuaded to settle in these new communities.

We will probably never know how the story of the Pied Piper of Hamelin first came about. One should consider that part of the story might be true – that in 1284 some, perhaps many, of the town's children disappeared. Could a group of criminals lured them out of the city and abducted them? If so, it would have been an event that scarred the people of Hamelin for generations, and whose notoriety would have spread throughout Germany and beyond for centuries afterwards.

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The Poet, the Physician and the Birth of the Modern Vampire

publicdomainreview.org

From that famed night of ghost-stories in a Lake Geneva villa in 1816, as well as Frankenstein's monster, there arose that other great figure of 19th-century gothic fiction – the vampire – a creation of Lord Byron's personal physician John Polidori. Andrew McConnell Stott explores how a fractious relationship between Polidori and his poet employer lies behind the tale, with Byron himself providing a model for the blood-sucking aristocratic figure of the legend we are familiar with today.

Detail from F.G. Gainsford's portrait of John Polidori, ca. 1816, the year he would accompany Lord Byron to his Lake Geneva villa – Source

A vampire is a thirsty thing, spreading metaphors like antigens through its victim's blood. It is a rare situation that is not revealingly defamiliarized by the introduction of a vampiric motif, whether it be migration and industrial change in *Dracula*, adolescent sexuality in *Twilight*, or racism in *True Blood*. Beyond undead life and the knack of becoming a bat, the vampire's true power is its ability to induce intense paranoia about the nature of social relations to ask, "who are the real bloodsuckers?"

This is certainly the case with the first fully realized vampire story in English, John William Polidori's 1819 story, "The Vampyre." It is Polidori's text that establishes the vampire as we know it via a reimagining of the feral mud-caked creatures of southeastern European legend as the elegant and magnetic denizens of cosmopolitan assemblies and polite drawing rooms.

"The Vampyre" is a product of 1816, the "year without summer," in which Lord Byron left England in the wake of a disintegrating marriage and rumours of incest, sodomy and madness, to travel to the banks of Lake Geneva and there loiter with Percy and Mary Shelley (then still Mary Godwin). Polidori served as Byron's travelling physician, and played an active role in the summer's tensions and rivalries, as well as participating in the famous night of ghost stories that produced Mary Shelley's "hideous progeny," *Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus*.

Like *Frankenstein*, "The Vampyre" draws extensively on the mood at Byron's Villa Diodati. But whereas Mary Shelley incorporated the orchestral thunderstorms that illuminated the lake and the sublime mountain scenery that served as a backdrop to Victor Frankenstein's struggles, Polidori's text is woven from the invisible dynamics of the Byron-Shelley circle, and especially the humiliations he suffered at Byron's hand.

John Polidori (1795-1821) was born in Soho, the eldest son of an English mother and an Italian writer, translator, and literary jack-of-all-trades. Raised to great precocity in a multi-lingual and hyper-literate home, he was sent to board at the Catholic Ampleforth College at

Detail from a hand-colored engraving of Villa Diodati, by Edward Francis Finden, ca. 1833, after a drawing by William Purser – Source .

the age of eight. Then just a remote and drafty lodge housing twelve boys and twenty-four Benedictine monks, Ampleforth provided instruction in history, languages, and the minutiae of Catholic devotion. Given this intense and closeted environment, it is no wonder that John should dream of entering the priesthood, but his father had chosen a different path for his son, pulling him from school at the age of fifteen to attend the university of Edinburgh to study medicine.

Medical education in the early nineteenth century was largely based around the study of "antiphlogistics"– learning how to master the various ways of ridding the body of noxious substances in the quickest way possible – and so John became skilled in blood-letting, vomiting, enemas, blistering, and plunge-baths. But Polidori hated medicine. A restless loner, he rejected his classmates as "automatons," while he himself dreamt of achieving glory, first on the battlefield fighting on behalf of Italy as it sought to repel the invading armies of Napoleon, and then through a growing attachment to literature. Thanks to the success Byron had achieved with the publication of his poem *Childe Harold* in 1812, it was only natural that young men in the early nineteenth century should conceive of poetry as not only a creative outlet, but as an avenue to fame, riches and sexual plenty. Under the long-distance mentorship of William Taylor of Norwich, a once notable, but now near-derelict essayist who was attracted to John's remarkable good looks, Polidori began to dabble in literature. His father, who knew the more likely privations of a literary life, ordered him to stick to his studies, and John obeyed, fulfilling a family dynamic that remained unchanged throughout his life – bowing to his father's wishes while inwardly caviling at the restraints they placed upon him.

Where most students wrote dissertations on the circulation of the blood or assorted fevers, John concluded his education by writing a dissertation on the uncanny phenomenon of sleep-walking that was heavily influenced by the French encyclopedists, before returning to London a newly-minted doctor at the tender age of twenty. Unfortunately, in order to practice in the capital it was necessary to be at least twenty six years old. It was while contemplating this stalling impediment that John was offered the job of physician to Lord Byron. John's father, who had once been the secretary to the vain and splenetic Italian tragedian, Vittorio Alfieri, ordered him not to take the position, while across town, Byron's friend John Cam Hobhouse counseled the poet against employing the vain young man with the funny name. Neither warning was sufficient, and together Byron and Polidori left for the Continent on St. George's Day, 1816.

Their relationship got off to an uneasy start in Dover as they awaited a convivial tide. Over dinner, John had invited Byron to read from a play he had written, and Byron obliged, but in the company of garrulous friends who had come to see him off, found it impossible to resist the urge to make them laugh one last time. Polidori, an outsider, an employee, was forced to

Lord Byron in traditional Albanian dress, a replica painted by Thomas Phillips (in 1835) of his original painting of 1813 – Source .

sit and listen as Byron lampooned his sophomoric efforts and reduced the table to fits of giggles. Furious, John stormed off to pace the streets of Dover.

Away from Byron's friends, things improved a little, with John writing to his sister from Brussels to say that "I am with him on the footing of an equal." The democratic idyll did not last long, however, with Byron quickly losing patience with his doctor's bouts of travel sickness, and John resenting his employer's undemocratic arrogance. "Pray, what is there excepting writing that I cannot do better than you?" John asked Byron while stopped at an inn overlooking the Rhine. "There were three things, answered Byron, calmly. 'First,' he said, 'I can hit with a pistol the keyhole of that door – Secondly, I can swim across that river to yonder point – and thirdly, I can give you a damned good thrashing.'"

These feelings of resentment only grew, as John felt increasingly overshadowed in the famous man's company, with those they met instantly gravitating towards celebrity while he remained "like a star in the halo of the moon, invisible." At the same time, the doctor's petulance provoked Byron, whose wit was often cruel and rarely let an opportunity pass to mock his employee or put him in his place. In time, John began to feel that his own sense of self was being drained by his proximity to the poet. Increasingly, he sought to distance himself and in mid-June, made a half-hearted attempt at suicide.

It was no great leap for Polidori to believe that Byron was sucking the life from him, just as others had accused Byron of possessing a charismatic power that eclipsed their own identities. Amelia Opie, one of the many women Byron had charmed, described him as having "such a voice as the devil tempted Eve with; you feared its fascination the moment you heard it," a mesmeric quality that critics also found in his verse, which had, according to the critic Thomas Jones de Powis, "the facility of…bringing the minds of his readers into a state of vassalage or subjection."

But the most overt example of Byron as the devourer of souls was a novel John read over the course of the summer – *Glenarvon* by Lady Caroline Lamb. Byron and Lamb had enjoyed a brief and transgressive affair until he, somewhat rattled by the vivid expanse of her erotic imagination, had called it off. The novel is a thinly veiled portrait of the relationship set in a lonely castle during the Irish Rebellion of 1798, that interweaves breathless Gothic fiction with the wayward love of Calantha for the Irish rebel Lord Glenarvon. Glenarvon is a brooding anti-hero who dresses as a monk, stalks ruined priories, and howls like a wolf at the moon. His face glowers "as if the soul of passion had been stamped and printed upon every feature," possessing the ability to enslave her. "Weep," he cries, binding her ever tighter to him, "I like to see your tears; they are the last tears of expiring virtue. Henceforward you will shed no more." Calantha is powerless. "My love is death."

That Polidori took inspiration from Lamb is revealed in the name he gives his villain – Lord Ruthven, one of Glenarvon's various ancestral titles. Polidori's Ruthven also inhabits

Lady Caroline Lamb, painted by Eliza H. Trotter, ca. 1811 – Source .

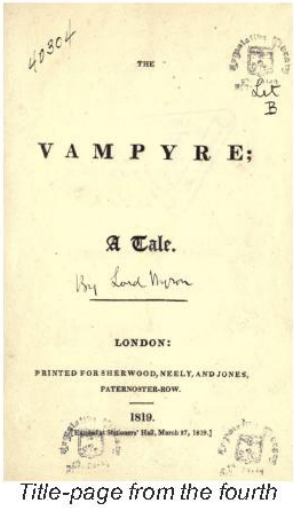
Glenarvon's aristocratic milieu as a member of the *bon ton*. He is a pale and fascinating nobleman who appears in London "more remarkable for his singularities, than for his rank," and who incites awe amongst the ranks of fashionable ladies by virtue of his melancholy air and "reputation of a winning tongue."

In "The Vampyre," Ruthven befriends a young gentleman named Aubrey, whom he invites to accompany him on a journey to Greece. Once there, Aubrey falls in love with Ianthe, a beautiful peasant girl who recounts the legend of the vampire but is brutally murdered soon after. Aubrey comes to suspect Ruthven, but the mysterious aristocrat is shot by bandits before the truth can be revealed. As Ruthven lays dying, he manages to extract a promise from the young man, asking him not to announce his death in England for a year and a day. Aubrey agrees, and Ruthven literally dies laughing.

After a long and meandering journey home, the sad and raddled Aubrey is finally able to return to society, where he is horrified to discover Ruthven alive and well. "Remember your oath," whispers the man who has died in his arms, thus driving Aubrey so far from his wits that he succumbs to a protracted illness. In the meantime, Aubrey's sister is engaged to be married, and though he has yet to meet the groom, it slowly dawns on him that it must be Ruthven. Impatient for his oath to expire and growing weaker by the day, he finally sends his assistants to her rescue only to discover they are too late: "Lord Ruthven had disappeared, and Aubrey's sister had glutted the thirst of a VAMPYRE!"

Knowing the context of Polidori's story, it is hard not to read "The Vampyre" as an allegory of the doctor's relationship with Byron, a text that is seamed with the mocking laughter of a man possessed of the power to debilitate through the force of personality alone. Furthermore, it rewrites the well-known story of Byron's success since the publication of *Childe Harold*, wherein a young nobleman goes abroad and returns filled with capacious understanding of himself and the world, by showing that his melancholy air is a deceit, a mendacious con perpetuated on a gullible claque of fools for the purpose of their exploitation. As a meditation on the degeneracy of a society that has encouraged the excesses of celebrity to such an extent that it has been allowed to dwarf the higher values and enable the abuse of the virtuous and the innocent, it damns absolutely the superficial lure of fame.

Rather than providing a creative outlet for Polidori, the publication of "The Vampyre" only served to compound his humiliation. Although the text was similarly prompted by the ghost story competition that inspired Mary Shelley so ably, John only completed his story for the pleasure of a friend outside of the Byron-Shelley circle. The manuscript lay forgotten for three years until finally coming into the hands of the disreputable journalist Henry Colburn, who published it in his *New Monthly Magazine* under the title "The Vampyre: A Tale by Lord Byron."



THE

VAMPYRE;

A Tale.

By Lord Byron

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR SHERWOOD, NEELY, AND JONES,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1819.

Title-page from the fourth state of the first edition published by Sherwood, Neeley and Jones in 1819. Although this version of the title-page was reset to remove Lord Byron's name as author, someone has re-written it in by hand – Source .

The response was predictably lively. Goethe proclaimed it Byron's greatest ever work, and popular hardback editions went through numerous reprintings, leaving Polidori scrambling to assert his rights as its author in the face of accusations that he was either a plagiarist or misusing Byron's name to further his own reputation. John tried to take control by preparing his own edition, but the public was not interested, and disgusted with the literary life, he attempted to rejoin Ampleforth and train as a monk. Still "The Vampyre" plagued him as his application was denied because of "certain publications which I have seen," wrote the Prior, "and of which I must tell [you] as a friend, I wish you had not been the author." Polidori enrolled to study law using his mother's maiden name, but, finding no appetite for it, fell into gambling. With the shadow of Byron making everything he did seem paltry and derivative, and the weight of rejection impressing itself on him like a judgment on his being, John Polidori took his own life at the age of twenty five by drinking a beaker of cyanide.

"Poor Polidori," wrote Byron when he heard the news, "it seems that disappointment was the cause of this rash act. He had entertained too sanguine hopes of literary fame."

Andrew McConnell Stott is the author of *Comedy* (Routledge, 2005; 2nd edn, 2014) and *The Pantomime Life of Joseph Grimaldi* (Canongate, 2009), which won the Royal Society of Literature Jerwood Prize for Non-Fiction and was named as one of the Guardian's "Books of the Year" for 2010. In 2013 he published *The Poet and the Vampyre: The Curse of Byron and the Birth of Literature's Greatest Monsters* (Canongate/Pegasus 2013), which was a best book pick of 2013 for both *The Big Issue* and *The Sunday Times*.

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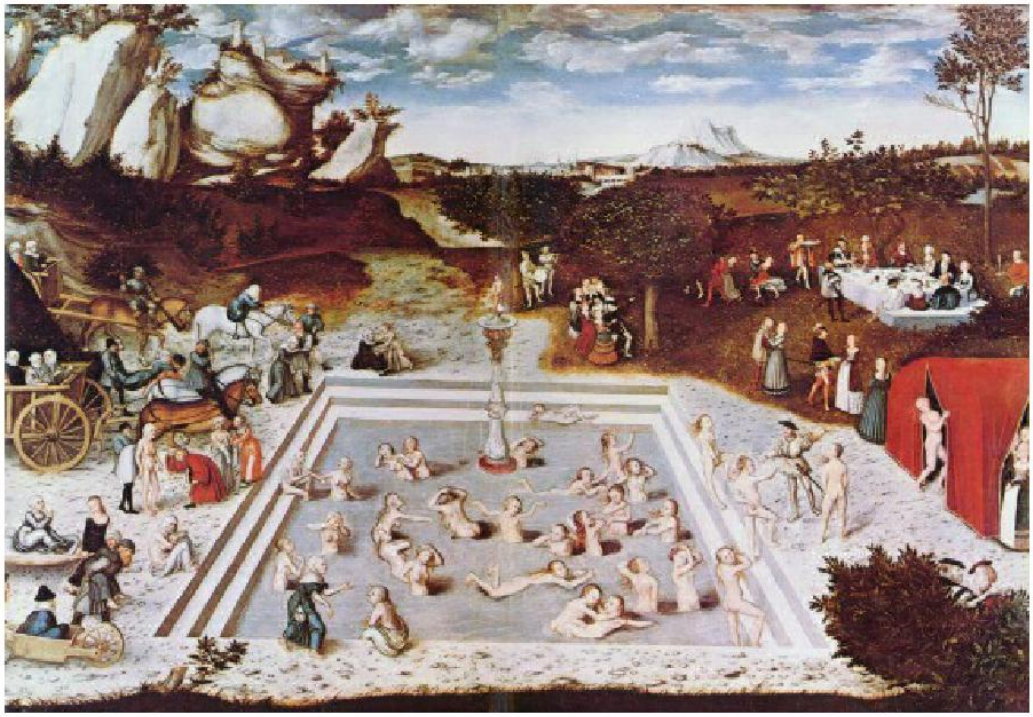
The Quest for the Fountain of Youth

November 4, 2014 Brent Swancer

http://mysteriousuniverse.org/2014/11/the-quest-for-the-fountain-of-youth/

Human kind, indeed all living things have always been tethered to aging and death. For all of our mastery of technology and medical knowledge, it is an inevitable, inescapable fate for us to grow old and die. For thousands of years there have been those who would avert this creeping certainty of aging, who would break the cycle of deterioration, death, and decay. The quest for a way to remain young forever has consumed mankind and throughout history, across a wide range of cultures, there has been a strong belief in lost magical springs with the purported ability to restore youth, stop aging, indeed to staunch the inexorable march of death.

The search for eternal youth and a fountain of youth is a frequent fixture of various myths and legends from around the world. One of the earliest accounts of such a place comes from the 5th century BC, when the Greek historian Herodotus wrote of a fountain in the land of the Macrobians, which gave the people of the region exceptionally long life spans. In the 3rd century AD, Alexander the Great was said to have searched for a fountain of youth, allegedly crossing a mythical land covered in eternal night called The Land of Darkness to reach it. The legendary Christian patriarch and king, Prester John, allegedly ruled over a land containing a similar fountain during the early Crusades during the 11th and 12th centuries AD. In Japan, stories of hot springs that can heal wounds and restore youth were also common and still are to this day.



Do not get the Fountain of Youth mixed up with the toddler's pool

During the Age of Exploration, when European global exploration took off in the 15thcentury AD, interest in such a mythical fountain of youth had not waned. The New World of the Americas began to be seen as a potential location for a fountain of eternal youth. The Caribbean in particular was considered a prime candidate, as many islanders spoke of a lost land of wealth and prosperity known as Bimini, which became entwined with the legend of a fountain of youth. The Fountain of Youth was a hot topic in those days. The Spanish historian, Lopez de Gomara, wrote of Indian accounts of a magical river, waterfall, or spring that could reverse aging and could be found in the lands north of Cuba and Haiti. Pietro Martire d'Anghiera, an Italian geographer living in Spain, in 1513 wrote of the fountain as well, saying:

> "*Among the islands of the north side of Hispaniola, about 325 leagues distant, as said by those who have searched for it, is a continual spring of flowing water of such marvelous virtue that the water thereof being drunk, perhaps with some diet, maketh old men young again*"

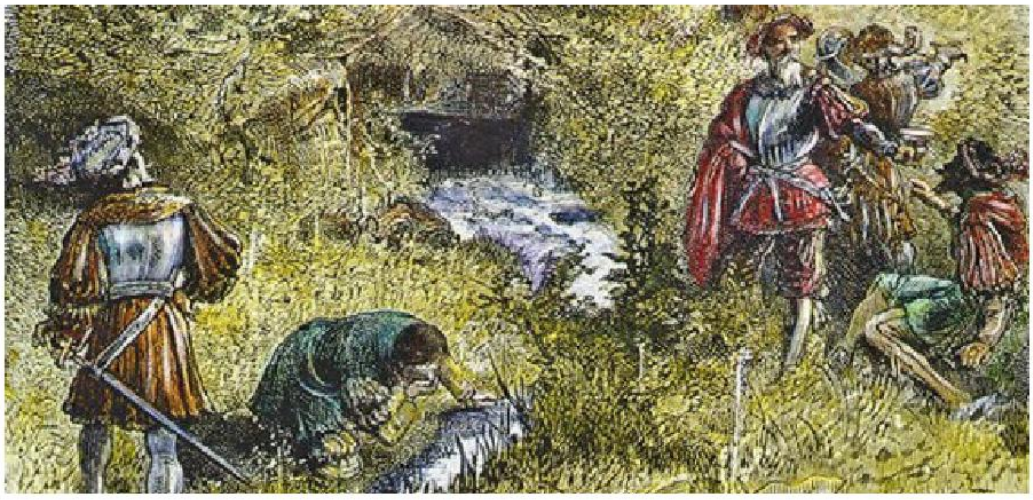
During this era of exploration of the New World, it was indeed the Spanish who took a particular interest in such a mystical spring, after hearing widespread talk of Bimini and fountains of restorative waters from the Arawaks in Hispaniola, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. Florida was a land of many natural springs, and it was thought that one of these was the mystical Fountain of Youth of local legend.

One name has become inextricably linked to the quest for the Fountain of Youth is that of the Spanish explorer and conquistador Juan Ponce de León, who was the first governor of Puerto Rico and, in 1513, led the first European expeditions into what would become Florida. It was alleged that during his explorations of Florida, while looking to find lost gold and claim land for Spain, the explorer had the ulterior motive of finding the lost land of Bimini and thus the Fountain of Youth, which he was convinced existed. It

was claimed that during his forays into Florida, the explorer would unofficially go off with a small contingent of men in an effort to locate the fountain.

Although Ponce de León became connected to and perhaps best known for his quest for the Fountain of Youth, it has long been debated as to just how much fact there is to this story. One of the problems lies in the fact that there are virtually no surviving records of the expeditions to Florida written by Ponce de León himself, and the fountain is not mentioned in any that do exist. Most accounts that we now have were actually written long after his death by native arrow in 1521. Nevertheless, historical references to the explorer's obsession with the mythical fountain abound. One of the best sources of information on Ponce de León's travels and search for the fountain is the writings of Antonio de Herrera y Tordesillas, who was the Chief Historian of the Indies in 1596. Amongst his accounts, Herrera wrote in his impressively titled recordHistoria general de los hechos de los Castellanos en las islas y tierra firme del Mar Oceanoof Ponce de León's quest:

> "*Juan Ponce overhauled his ships, and although it seemed to him that he had worked hard he decided to send out a ship to identify the Isla de Bimini even though he did not want to, for he wanted to do that himself. He had an account of the wealth of this island (Bimini) and especially that singular Fountain that the Indians spoke of, that turned men from old men into boys. He had not been able to find it because of the shoals and currents and contrary weather. He sent, then, Juan Pérez de Ortubia as captain of the ship and Antón de Alaminos as pilot. They took two Indians to guide them over the shoals… The other ship arrived and reported that Bimini had been found, but not the Fountain.*"



This seems intriguing, but considering that it was written over 70 years after the explorer's death, one has to wonder how much veracity the account holds. This information could have been hearsay, and was probably second or third hand information at best.

An even earlier account in 1535, closer to Ponce de León's death, was written by a court chronicler by the name of Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, in his book Historia General y Natural de las Indias, in which he mentions the explorer going off looking for the fountain using information gathered from the natives of the area. Oviedo's report is difficult to take at face value for several reasons. It is said that the chronicler did not like Ponce de León, and wrote the account in a way that suggests the explorer was trouncing off on a fool's errand. In short, it is believed that the whole story written by Oviedo was an attempt to gain favor with the courts and was a political attack designed to discredit Ponce de León and basically make him look like an idiot. Oviedo even went as far as to suggest that Ponce de León's quest for the fountain was part of a misguided attempt to cure his sexual impotency. Ouch. The political animosity between the two was understandable, since Oviedo was in with Diego Columbus, who had helped to push Ponce de León out of Puerto Rico and just so happened to be the son of none other than Christopher Columbus. Due to this underlying rivalry, it is hard to know how reliable Oviedo's account is.

Other historical accounts also make mention of Ponce de León's quest for the Fountain of Youth. In Francisco López de Gómara's Historia General de las Indias of 1551, the author describes Ponce de León's search for the fountain. In 1575, the author Hernando D'Escalante Fontaneda wrote in his memoir that the Fountain of Youth was located in Florida and that the Spanish explorer had gone looking for it there. Fontaneda claimed to have been a prisoner of local natives for 17 years as a boy, and described the Indians as making use of a lost river that contained curative water, which he says Ponce de León was looking to find. Fontaneda's account has a very skeptical feel to it, and the author seems to doubt that finding the fountain was the explorer's first priority.

Although there is a certain romantic element to the idea of Ponce de León going off in search of fabled lands and mystical springs in the jungles of ancient Florida, it is uncertain if it ever happened at all. In the

end, we are left with scattered historical documents that were written after Ponce de León's death and none of which were written by the explorer himself, leaving his true intent and what really happened lost to the mists of time.

This uncertainty regarding the historical quest for the Fountain of Youth has not stopped the legend from enduring. Some even claim that the explorer was successful in his mission, indeed possibly still alive somewhere out there, enjoying his perpetual youth. To this day, there is a spring said to be the actual one that Ponce de León was searching for in St. Augustine, Florida, which is said to be the oldest city in the U.S. The Fountain of Youth Archaeological Park in St. Augustine has become a popular tourist destination, where visitors can drink cups of water from the fabled spring. The park has seen various important archeological finds, such as an ancient cemetery and the ruins of missions dating back to the city's founding. Although the site undoubtedly has historical value, the elderly people who come to visit in droves have yet to miraculously regain their youth, and it is doubted if Ponce de León ever even set foot in St. Augustine.

The Fountain of Youth Archeological Park, St. Augustine, Florida

Whether Ponce de León ever really did search for the Fountain of Youth, there have nevertheless been stories over the years of those who have claimed to have found it. In 1989, the author Charlie Carlson allegedly interviewed a man who claimed to be a member of a secret society that had located the Fountain

of Youth and were tasked with protecting it. The interviewee claimed to be 93 years old, whereas Carlson described him as looking around 40. The man claimed that the fountain had been found sometime before 1845 and that it was his society's duty to make sure that it remained secret from the world. This anonymous informant reportedly offered proof to back up his claims in the form of census records for all of the members who had lived past 110 years old, of which there were quite a few. Some had apparently lived to be up to 122 years old while appearing to be much younger. Although many had died in accidents such as drowning, against which the magical waters offered no protection, not a single one was found to have died of old age. Is there really a secret cabal of immortals out there who have drunk from the fountain and have pledged to eternally hide its secret? Nobody knows.

While in modern days it will likely be genetics and stem cells that lead to prolonged life, mankind's quest for immortality is not new and has taken many forms through the centuries, with various elixirs, magical charms, and famous artifacts such as the Philosopher's Stone all reputed to grant everlasting life. Perhaps in the case of Florida's Fountain of Youth there may be such a place tucked away among the many springs that are to be found here. Whether it is there or not, it is intriguing to imagine such wonders, and there will be those who will search no matter what, enamored with the notion that it could be possible to live forever if only they could find it. Maybe there are even those who already have.

The Real Ghosts of Sleepy Hollow - Who Forted? Magazine

By Ken Summers on October 13, 2014 whofortedblog.com

For centuries, one location in the United States has captivated the collective creepy imagination. Its mere mention is enough to mentally transport us to a moonlit dirt road in dark, creepy woods. Still a favorite topic of movies and television shows, you could call it "a *ghouled* place to live", but Sleepy Hollow will suffice.

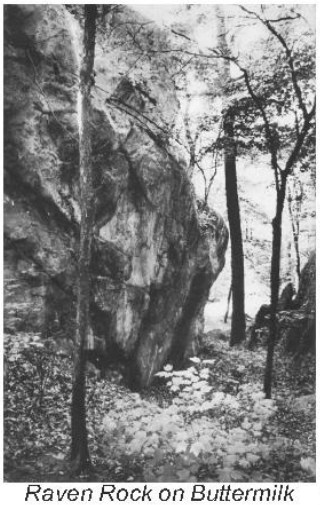
Now, Sleepy Hollow is indeed a real place. It's not the same as it was back in 1818 when Irving penned his classic American ghost story, but almost two centuries later, the town still celebrates its biggest claim to fame. Formerly known as North Tarrytown, this village was renamed Sleepy Hollow in 1996 to pay homage to Irving's story and identify itself as the home to America's very first wildly popular ghost story. But while *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* was a work of fiction, there are countless ghost stories and haunted places throughout the Hudson Valley making this spot one of the most haunted places in the country (if not the world).

When you think of New York, the legendary ghost ship known as the *Flying Dutchman* is certainly not a connection you might draw. But the ship was said to make landfall every seven years. One such place is the wide, lake-like part of the Hudson River called Tappan Zee. During terrible storms, the *Dutchman* has been reported sailing up the river. As if that's not reason enough to avoid the water, the *Manitou* (or spirits of those who've drowned in the Hudson since native times, numbering at least several hundred) are blames for the rogue waves and sudden storms very common to the waterway there. Near Donderberg Mountain, it remains a custom for sailors to tip their hats out of respect for the imp, or *dwerg*, of John Coleman, skipper to Henry Hudson who drowned there in 1609, or else face the storms he will send down to try to sink their ships. Elsewhere on the Tappan Zee, Captain Kidd and his ghostly crew of the *Adventure Galley* are believed to haunt the waters beneath Bear Mountain Bridge in search of buried treasure, and the ghost of Rambout Van Dam appears in the Sunday morning mist below the Tappan Zee Bridge as a skeleton with glowing green eyes wearing ragged clothes in a rowboat. Brigadier General "Mad" Anthony Wayne is also believed to haunt the river, patrolling for enemy ships.

Ghostly women seem to be one common theme in Sleepy Hollow as well. (And I don't mean the 'Lady in Black' said to haunt the apartments near Patriot's Park.) Sleepy Hollow's more frequently reported ghost, the Lady in White, is often seen and heard around Raven Rock. Her wailing is said to be a harbinger of oncoming winter storms. Her story, however, has a few different variations. Some say she was an Indian maiden who leapt to her death in the river at Raven Rock and was turned into a spirit by ravens.

Fog and storms are routine, unpredictable encounters on the Tappan Zee.

Another version says that an old woman was trapped in a blizzard while foraging for firewood near Spook Rock (a.k.a. Raven Rock). There is another variation which says that a woman went to the rock in her wedding dress to wait for her fiancé to return from war and froze to death in the snow; some people claim that during winter storms, you can still hear her calling, "My Beloved! Have you come for me?" Whichever version you prefer, people report floating lights crossing the cemetery on their way to Raven's Rock on Buttermilk Hill, accompanied by 'unearthly moans', before harsh winter storms approach. An old legend claims these moans emanate from Raven Rock itself stemming from an old Indian curse.



Raven Rock on Buttermilk Hill, home to many ghostly women, perhaps?

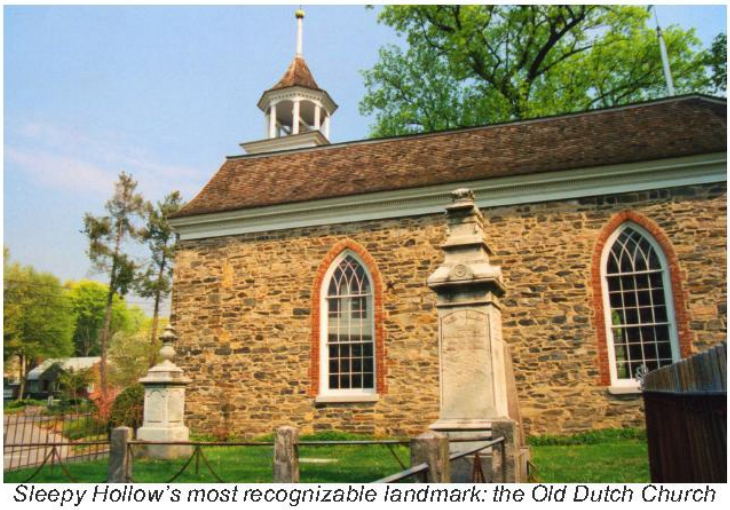
Another female spirit there is that of Mother Hulda, an old German woman living in a hut alone near the old burying grounds and Raven Rock. Though shunned by the Dutch community, her herbal remedies were always secretly in demand. In 1777 when the Redcoats marched in to Tarrytown, Mother Hulda took up her musket to defend the town. She lost her life in the battle and was buried in an unmarked paupers grave on the north wall of Old Dutch Church. There, she can still be seen wandering among the tombstones. She may have some spooky company in the form of a statue, as well. The 'Bronze Lady' of Sleepy Hollow Cemetery is a statue at a mausoleum. Teenagers claim that if you sit in her lap, spit in her eye, kick her in the shins, knock on the door of the tomb, and look inside, you'll be plagued by nightmares for two weeks. Although if you ask me, that's asking for trouble. The King Mansion, at Tarrytown House Estate and Conference Center, is haunted by the white-gowned ghost of Sybil Harris King who paces the second floor hallways.

A popular place for weddings, the King Mansion may come with its own 'woman in white'.

While Washington Irving's headless horseman was a fictional character, he borrowed the idea from old European legends like *The Wild Huntsman* as well as historical incidents around Tarrytown. British Major John Andre was pulled into the treasonous plot of the infamous Benedict Arnold and captured by patriots near a tulip tree along Albany Post Road. He was later hanged for his involvement on October 2, 1780. Today, a large tulip tree still grows about where that fateful moment occurred near Andre's Brook in what is today called Patriot's Park. Still today, shortly before dawn, people have reported hearing a horse galloping fast past the creek, followed by the sound of uncontrollable sobbing, said to be that of John Andre mourning over his mistakes. If legends are to be believed, the only way to stop his piteous crying is to utter the words his captors first spoke to him: "*What party are you from?*"

Andre's Brook flows through Patriot's Park. The haunted Andre's Bridge has been replaced by several stone bridges.

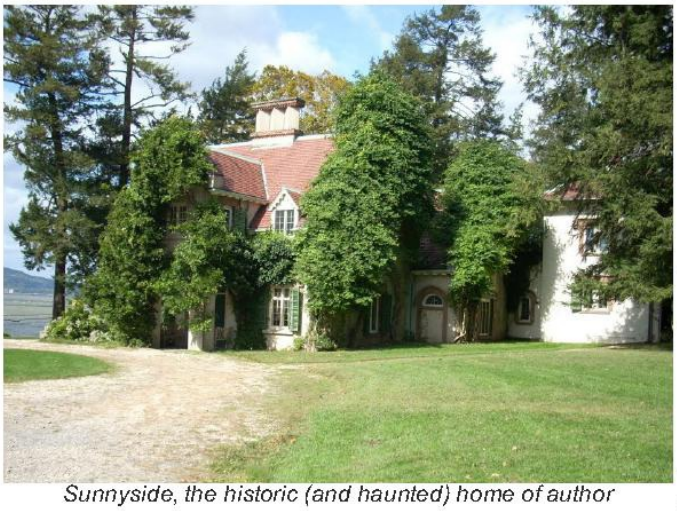
But what about the headless Hessian, you ask? Well, you might be surprised to learn that there actually was one. Many Hessians fought with the British as mercenaries during the Revolutionary War. (And yes, Irving was named after General George Washington.) One of the clashes with American troops occurred just nine miles from the heart of Sleepy Hollow in what was known as the Battle of White Plains. According to a memoir written by General William Heath in 1798, a cannonball took off the head of a Hessian artilleryman during this campaign. And of all dates for this incident, it happened on Halloween of 1776. A year later, bodies strewn over the same hills were removed and it's believed that this headless Hessian's skeleton was then taken and interred among the dead at Old Dutch Burying Ground. At midnight, the headless Hessian is reported to ride his horse at the Old Dutch Church and Sleepy Hollow Cemetery even to this day. Other sightings include a headless Hessian in full uniform on Mount Airy Road near Teller's Point some ten miles north of Sleepy Hollow and yet another on Albany Post Road at the Rogers-Haight Homestead (where allegedly a soldier lost his head in an argument with another soldier over a pig).



Sleepy Hollow's most recognizable landmark: the Old Dutch Church and Burying Ground.

Lastly, no list of hauntings in Sleepy Hollow would be complete without mentioning Washington Irving's hone named Sunnyside. Originally a simple tenant farmhouse built back in 1656, what Irving called "Wolfert's Roost" became his home in 1835. He remodeled it extensively, adding a Spanish monastic-inspired tower and turning the house into what resembles a Dutch mansion. But even when Irving moved in, there were whispers that the house was haunted.

After thorough renovations in 1945 made possible in part by John D. Rockefeller, Sunnyside opened as a public museum in October 1947. According to the *New York Times* article on its grand opening celebration, the centuries-old ghost story is that of a haunting by "…a young lady who wandered through the orchard. She is said to have died of love and green apples." Irving himself claimed to have seen her in an upstairs bedroom on one occasion. She may have otherworldly company, though, since Irving's five nieces are believed to haunt the house and property, tidying up the museum after it closes. Even the love of Irving's life Matilda Hoffman—tragically killed at 17



Sunnyside, the historic (and haunted) home of author Washington Irving.

by consumption and believed to have been part of the inspiration for Katrina van Tassel—is said to still peek at visitors from behind trees in the old orchard. The home's original owner, Wolfert Acker, also haunts the same orchard.

Yet the second best-known ghost of Sunnyside is none other than Washington Irving himself. In 1843, Irving wrote, "I really believe that when I die I shall haunt it [Sunnyside]; but it will be as a good spirit, that no one needs to be afraid of." An "amiable ghost", Irving has been witnessed in his former bedroom where he died on November 28, 1859, as well as his study. Whether or not it's quite considered amiable, it's believed that Irving's ghost has a habit of occasionally pinching the butts of women. Forever the ladies' man, I guess.

As if that weren't enough ghosts, every April 25th, the spectral Lincoln Funeral Train is said to roll past the estate on the old Hudson River Railroad line making its annual spooky pilgrimage to Springfield, Illinois, as it has since 1865.

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This is the "talking mirror" which Maria Sophia's father gave to her stepmother.
It survives at the family home (which is now the Spessart Museum) in Lohr am Main (in the German state of Bavaria).

Snow White - COULD SHE BE MARIA?

https://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/SNOW-WHITE-COULD-SHE-BE-MARIA-Snow-White

The Bavarian town of Lohr am Main (Lohr on the Main River) may be the hometown of the real Snow White.

In the middle of the eighteenth-century, a Prince named Philipp Christoph von Erthal lived in a Lohr-area castle with his family. On the 15th of June, 1729, the prince and his wife had a baby daughter.

According to records in the local town hall, the von Erthals named their child Maria Sophia Margaretha Catherina. (People often used lots of names in those days.)

At some point - historians believe it was in 1741 - Maria Sophia's mother died. Prince Philipp married again (likely in 1743). His new wife - Maria's stepmother - was Claudia Elisabeth von Erthal.

German historians tell us that Claudia von Erthal was a domineering woman who clearly favored her own children - from her first marriage - over Maria Sophia. She moved into Prince Philipp's castle in Lohr am Main.

Lohr is located near a heavily forested part of Bavaria known as the Spessart ("Woodpecker") Forest. When the von Erthals lived there, the town was also famous for a glassworks company called Kurmainzische Spiegelmanufaktur (the Lohr Mirror Manufacturer).

Glass-making businesses were often located near forests, particularly during the Middle Ages, since trees were needed for the glass-making process. The Lohr glassmaking company is still in business.

Eighteenth-century mirrors, produced by Lohr's glass company, were famous for their extraordinary quality. The glass was so good that people said the mirrors "always spoke the truth."

Perhaps that reputation caused some of the mirrors, made by the glassworks company, to be called "Talking Mirrors." Historians believe that Prince Philipp bought one of those "talking mirrors" for his second wife, Maria Sophia's stepmother Claudia.

The mirror, which the Brothers Grimm may have incorporated into their story, survives at the von Erthal castle. So does a pair of child's shoes - now 200 years old - found in the family's home (which has now been transformed into the Spessart Museum).

So far, the evidence linking Snow White to Maria Sophia seems fairly compelling, but what about the seven dwarfs? What clues do we have about their existence in the Lohr region of Germany?

As it happens ... there are persuasive clues about that issue, too.

The general area, in and around Lohr, is known as "The Spessart." In addition to the great forest - among the last of Germany's virgin trees - the Spessart has seven mountains. Some of the mountains contain rich natural resources which were previously mined.

The town of Bieber - located west of Lohr, at the northwest border of the Spessart - was once the

region's mining center. The area mines were very productive and economically significant. They were best-known for their copper and lead.

Mine seams, shafts and tunnels were usually very narrow, so only the smallest of miners could move around in them. Many of the miners in Bieber - just like miners in other places throughout Europe (and Germany) - were children.

The Brothers Grimm - who were born in Hanau, on the western edge of the Spessart - likely knew all about these stories and goings-on. They likely knew about something else, too.

A poisonous plant, commonly known as "Deadly Nightshade," grows throughout the Spessart region. In addition to its berries, which can be deadly to people, the plant is the basis of atropine. Such a substance, when applied to a peddler's wares or injected into an apple, could cause someone to become extremely ill - or die.

If Snow White (whom the Brothers Grimm called Schneewittchen) * really was Maria Sophia, she certainly had access to a deep forest if she ran away from home. If she ran to a home maintained by miners, would those miners have been dwarfs - or - could they have been children?

In addition to natural resources like copper and lead, the Bavarian section of Germany is also known for its salt. Salzbergwerk - a salt mine in Berchtesgaden located near the Eagle's Nest (Hitler's mountaintop retreat) - is the most famous. It has been in continuous operation since ... 1517.

During medieval times, traders created a lengthy transportation route which crossed the Spessart. Mined salt traveled along that 111-kilometer trade route - known as the "Donkeys' Path" - to shipping ports along the Main River. Tourists, enjoying the area's gorgeous scenery, can still make the trek along the donkey trail.

For hundreds of years, mines in Germany - just like mines in Britain - were worked by children. Mining conditions were so bad that child miners did not live long. Those who survived often showed the marks of stunted growth. Parliamentary records provide evidence for this:

... The physical condition of the boys and girls engaged in the collieries [mines] is much inferior to that of Children of the same years engaged in farming operations, in most trades, or who remain at home unemployed. These Children are, upon the whole, prejudicially affected to a material extent in their growth and development; many of them are short for their years. (Quoted in Parliamentary Papers, Volume 15, at page 184.)

People who managed mines also observed that child miners had stunted growth:

In North Wales, Mr. Samuel Cunnah, manager of the Morton Colliery, Ruabon, states that "He considers early work bad for Children, because he thinks it stops their growth." (Quoted in Parliamentary Papers, Volume 15, at page 184.)

Stunted growth affected child miners even when they were adults. John Russell, a surgeon working at the Dowlais Iron Works, made the point:

In stature I believe a difference to exist in the male youth from twelve to sixteen employed in the mines and collieries, compared with those engaged in other work, the former being somewhat stunted; and

this difference (under some form or other) seems still perceptible in the adult miners and colliers. (Quoted in Parliamentary Papers, Volume 15, at page 185.)

Applying those facts to the story of Snow White - whether she was actually Margarete, Maria Sophia or a totally made-up girl - we can draw some conclusions:

The miners in the story were probably miners for a long time;

- If they were adults, they likely started work as child miners;
- If they were child miners, they could have been afflicted with stunted growth;
- If that stunted growth continued into adulthood, the miners were short of stature;
- People of short stature are sometimes known as dwarfs.

Therefore ... we could theoretically conclude that the miners, in the Snow White story, were adult dwarfs who began their working careers as children.

Supposed Camel Corps camel at an unknown location

Most Americans know that Jefferson Davis was the president of the Confederate States of America from 1861 until 1865, however not everyone knows that before becoming the president of the largest rebellion in U.S. history, he served as a U.S. Senator from Mississippi, Colonel of the Mississippi Rifles Militia Unit during the Mexican-American War and Secretary of War under President Franklin Pierce. As a young U.S. Army officer, Davis was approached by a fellow officer who recommended that the U.S. Army use camels as transportation. He spoke of the camel's ability to survive in the harsh desert environment of the southwest on very little food or water. Camels are also known for their great strength and stamina. Over twenty years later, U.S. Secretary of War, Jefferson Davis ordered the creation of the First U.S. Camel Corps. Major Henry Wayne was sent to Turkey to acquire sixty-two camels and trainers who would teach U.S. soldiers the proper handling and use of the animals.

The camels were transported by boat to Indianola, Texas, arriving on May 14, 1856. With a combined effort between the U.S. Cavalry and seven Turkish and Arab handlers, the camels were driven overland to the newly established Camp Verde (established June, 1856), located in Kerr County, Texas. Almost immediately Army officers began to make notes regarding the camels' inability to cohabitate with the horses and mules that they were replacing, and often times could not get along with each other. One of the government hired handlers, a Turk named Hadji Ali, commonly referred to as "Hi Jolly", began training the cavalry soldiers who would be using the animals to survey west Texas, Arizona and New Mexico territories. He also established a successful breeding program while stationed at Camp Verde. Jefferson Davis's experiment proved to be a success however the Civil War would bring an end to the surveyor's duties in the southwest and the government began a campaign to sell the camels to anyone who wanted one. At the height of the war, Confederate forces, made up of mostly home guard and militia soldiers, seized Camp Verde and the remaining camels in 1863, however there are no records that reveal if the camels were ever used by the Confederates. Most historians believe that the camels were released onto the Texas plains.

In 1883 a woman living on a southern Arizona ranch was trampled to death by, what one witness described as a huge red beast with a skeletal creature riding on its back. Local ranchers pursued the beast but only found cloven hoof prints and clumps of red animal hair along the trail. As sightings of the beast began to emerge from southern Arizona, wild tales of the beast became larger and more elaborate. The huge red beast with the devilish rider had the ability to take down and kill large animals such as cattle and bears, could run faster than any animal, was close to thirty feet tall and had the ability to disappear from sight. The creature was quickly dubbed, "The Red Ghost".

A few months and several sightings later, prospectors working in the Verde River, Arizona

The Red Ghost

area encountered the Red Ghost. They fired their riffles at the beast causing it to run away. In its retreat, something fell from the creatures back which would later be identified, by a local doctor, as a human skull with flesh and hair still attached. The discovery of the skull only strengthened the tales of the Red Ghost, Shortly after the discovery of the skull it was written in a local paper, Mohave County Miner, that the beast may be a camel, however most residents of the area had never seen a camel and would not know what one would look like. Furthermore there was no plausible explanation regarding the origin of the skeleton that was perched atop of the animal. The sightings continued for nearly a decade until February of 1893 when rancher, Mizoo Hastings sighted the Red Ghost grazing in his vegetable patch. He retrieved his rifle and brought the beast down with a single shot. Ranchers gathered from all around to view the camel that had gained so much notoriety and had terrorized the citizens of southern Arizona since it had first appeared in 1883. In the examination of the animal, it was determined that the “devilish skeleton” that had been seen riding the creature through the years was, in fact, a human skeleton that had been clearly tied to the animal with thick leather straps many years earlier. The origin of the skeletal rider has been lost to conjecture. Historians have speculated that perhaps the man was tied to the camel as some form of revenge for wrongdoings; Or that he was a Union soldier that was tied to the animal by the Confederate invaders of Camp Verde; Or he was a soldier, attached to the First U.S. Camel Corps, who was afraid of his unusual mount and was tied to the camel by a superior officer as a way to learn to ride. Whoever he was, he and the Red Ghost have found their way into America’s strange history.

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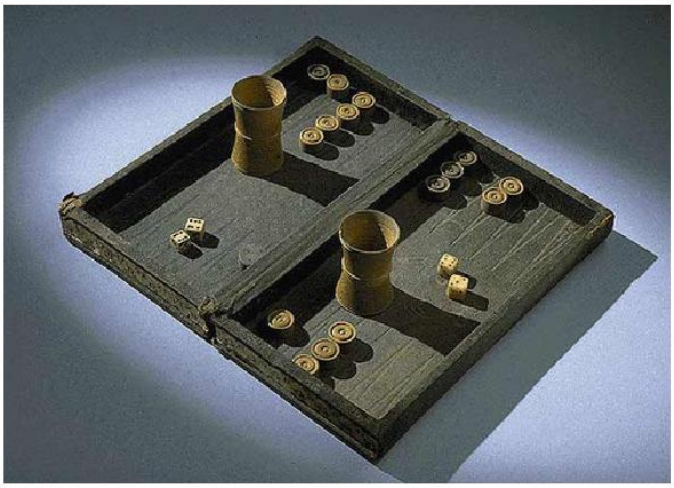
The Shah and the Girl

Dec. 7 2014

photos and notes from my Fulbright in Azerbaijan

Disclaimer: The views and information here are my own, and do not represent the Fulbright Program or the Department of State.

rough translation of an Azerbaijani folktale (translation from a Russian version)



Шах и девушка

It is said that once a month the Shah Abbas and his vizier would change their appearances and travel throughout the realm. Once, having disguised themselves, they set off through the cities and villages and came to a well. At the well, they saw a girl with a bucket in her hands. The Shah asked the girl to give him some water to drink. The girl put her hands into the bucket and dirtied the water. The Shah waited for a long time for the dirty water to settle. He was just about to take a drink of the well water, when again the girl dirtied the water. The Shah was troubled.

The girl realized that if she repeated her prank another time, he would be very angry. She filled the bucket with water and into it put a few straws. The Shah, having taken one of the straws, drank from the bucket till the end. Then the girl, pouring more water in the bucket, handed it to the vizier. After that, like a traveler whose thirst had been quenched, the girl left.

“Vizier,” said the surprised Shah, “I don’t understand why the girl dirtied the water, but I saw that she did it deliberately.”

“Yes, Shah. Would you like to go and ask her why?” invited the vizier.

The Shah agreed. They set off after the girl and found her house. Upon knocking, the girl’s father emerged. He appeared to be a merchant. The man took them to the back room. After a short conversation he asked the guests, “And who are you, brothers?”

“We are travelers,” answered Shah Abbas, “come to you to find the answer to one question.”

"Father, these are not any kind of travelers,” said the girl, interrupting the conversation. “One of them is Shah Abbas, and the other is his vizier. They have come to find out why I dirtied the water when they wanted to drink it.”

Shah Abbas was amazed at the mind of the girl and asked, “If you recognized us, girl, then

tell us, why did you dirty the water?"

"I saw that you were sweating after a long journey. If you would have, while sweating, drank the water, then you would have gotten sick, and because of this I dirtied the water in the well, so that you would cool down while it settled. I realized that my action angered you. Then I filled the bucket with water and added a few straws, so that you would cool a little more. I did this for the sake of your health."

Shah Abbas became convinced of the girl's wisdom and decided that he would marry her.

"Girl," Shah Abbas turned to her, "I would like to have a son as wise as you."

The girl immediately guessed what he was thinking.

"Shah, for that one mullah* is enough."

The Shah understood that the girl had given her consent to marry him. He sent the vizier to find a mullah. The vizier returned with the mullah, who immediately married them. The girl became the Shah's wife.

Shah Abbas, having decided to check the intelligence and devotion of his wife, did not touch her. He made her a condition. "I," he said, "will return to my city, and after two years will return here. At the time of my return, you must have fulfilled three of my wishes. Purchase a stallion that resembles my horse. Find a puppy that resembles my dog. Give birth to a son, who will resemble me. If you have not fulfilled these wishes, I will cut off your head."

The girl agreed to fulfill the wishes of the Shah. The Shah and the vizier said farewell to the girl and her father, and returned to their palace.

After the guests departed, the girl's father said, "Your courtship has caused trouble. What will you do now?"

His daughter calmed him and said, "Go and buy a mare, that looks like the Shah's horse, a female dog that looks like his dog, and a girl who looks like me. Everything else is not your concern."

Her father did as his daughter asked. He brought home a horse, a dog, and an orphan girl. Now, the merchant's daughter was named Rena Aliyeva. Rena spoke to the orphan who resembled her, saying, "You and I will go on a journey for a few months. I will dress as a young man, and you will wear my dress."

Having packed supplies for the road, and having said farewell to her father, the girl sat on the horse, on another sat the orphan, and with the dog in the saddlebag, they set off. They traveled and traveled, and after a few days they came to the Shah's capital city. Near the city, in the Shah's nature preserve, they pitched a tent. They let the horses graze and lay down to sleep.

While the girls slept in the tent, the Shah's huntsman appeared. No one was allowed to let

their horses graze in the Shah's nature preserve. The huntsman, seeing the horses, immediately ran to the Shah and told him that a tent had been pitched in the reserve and horses were grazing. The Shah was angry and ordered that the owner of the horses be brought to him. Rena Aliyeva was brought to the Shah, dressed as a young man. Rena bowed as was expected and greeted the Shah. The Shah asked, "Young man, how dare you bring horses to rest in my nature preserve?"

Rena answered that she wished long life to the ruler of the world, and that she was the son of the Sultan of Egypt, and her traveling companion was the daughter of the Sultan's brother. She said she had wanted to marry her cousin, but was not given permission. So the two of them had conspired to run away, to be under the protection of Shah Abbas.

"Well, if you are seeking protection, I will forgive you your crime," said the Shah.

The Shah liked the speech of the young man. He invited him to have lunch as a guest. After the meal, the Shah invited him to a game, "Let us play nardi*." Rena agreed. The Shah asked, "And for what will we play?"

"I have a horse, let us play for it. If you win, you can take it, if not, give me your stallion," answered Rena.

The Shah agreed. Rena won the first match. Immediately she sent for the Shah's horse to come and stand by her horse. The horses resembled one another.

"Let us play again," invited the Shah.

"Shah, I have a dog," said Rena. "If you win, you can take it, but if not, give me your dog." And that time, Rena defeated the Shah. She brought the Shah's dog to stand next to her own.

The Shah was angry. "How is it that this boy is beating me?"

"God loves threes," said the Shah. "Let us play once again."

Rena agreed. The Shah asked for what they would be playing this time.

"Long live the Shah," answered Rena. "With me, I have nothing besides my wife. Let us agree that if you win, you may take my wife as your bride. But if not, you must give me anyone from your harem."

The Shah agreed. Rena played, and lost to the Shah.

"Well, the promise must be fulfilled," said the Shah.

Rena returned to the tent. She told her friend everything that had happened. Rena gave her the man's clothing, and dressed herself in her women's clothing. The orphan wrote a letter, gave it to Rena and told her, "Now, take me to the Shah. Do not deliver the letter yet. After a little while return and give the letter to the Shah. Tell him that you made a mistake, by the

Shah's conscience, when he took your wife. Tell him you will return the horse and dog and reclaim the bride. Get me to the Shah, and your sorrows will end."

At that time, having redressed as a boy, Rena brought the young companion to the Shah. The Shah asked the girl if she knew about the promise.

"Yes, it is known to me," she answered.

Some time went by. The Shah was told that the young man wanted to see him. The Shah ordered to let him in. The youth was brought to the Shah. He handed over a letter, and said that he was very grateful to the Shah, for the hospitality of the last visit, however, it stung that the Shah took away his cousin. It is true that it was all part of the agreement, but the Shah did not have to agree. And now he would bring back the horse and the dog, and requested that the Shah return his bride.

"I agreed, and didn't you?" the Shah turned to Rena Aliyeva.

"Yes, I agreed," Rena answered. "But on that paper my own guilt is written, for at that time she was my wife."

So the Shah wrote and placed his seal on a letter, which he gave to the girl. Thanking the Shah, the young man and the girl left for home.

Days and months passed, and when the time came, the orphan gave birth to a son, the horse had a foal, and the dog had a puppy. The foal and puppy were exact copies of the stallion and hound of the Shah. The child looked just like Shah Abbas, as if they were two halves of the same apple.

Two or three years passed. The Shah remembered his promise to return for the merchant's daughter. He called the vizier, "Vizier, ready my stallion, we will go to the girl."

For seven days and seven nights the Shah and his vizier traveled. At last they reached the village where the girl lived. From afar, the girl noticed the guests, and put the son on the horse, which looked like the Shah's, and put the dog next to the horse and went to meet the Shah.

The Shah saw the similarities between the boy, dog, and horse to his own horse and dog, and was very surprised. Entering the house, he took out his sword and demanded, "This horse and dog may look like mine, but how is it possible, where did this boy come from?"

The Shah wanted to cut off the girl's head, but she said, "Wait a little and you will hear the truth."

The Shah put away his sword. The girl handed him the paper with his own stamp.

"This boy is your natural son," she said.

The Shah recognized the letter, written in his own hand, and could not hide his surprise. He

asked the girl to reveal her secret. The girl told the Shah how, in the guise of the son of the Sultan of Egypt, she had gone to him, and with her had been a cousin, an orphan girl who resembled her, and how she had won two rounds of nardi, and had lost one.

“Look, it is your son, your stallion, your hound.”

The Shah praised the girl’s intelligence, wit, and resourcefulness, and took his wife, son, dog, and horse and they all returned to the palace. There, they lived happily ever after and never knew grief.

*nardi is a game like backgammon

*mullah is a man educated in Islamic law and theology.

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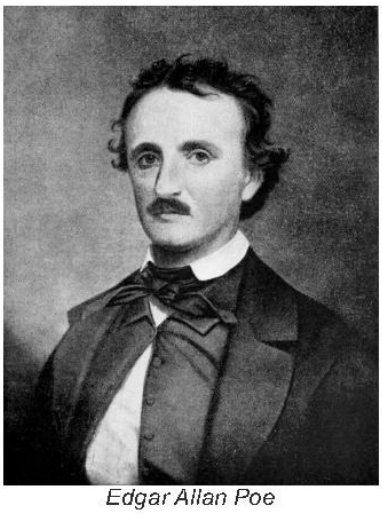

Edgar Allan Poe

The Balloon Hoax of 1844 amazes New York Sun readers

The fictitious imaginary tale was written with a scientific nonfiction style and people were fooled into thinking a floating balloon crossed the Atlantic Ocean. New Yorkers lined up outside the Sun building and wanted to purchase newspaper copies of the story. No one had seen hot air balloons launched over their area during the time. The Balloon Hoax caused the reading public to over act because they were enthusiastic about technological progress. They wanted to believe Mr. Monck Mason had actually navigated a hot air balloon across the Atlantic Ocean in 75 hours.

This story took place in a time when telegraphs had not been invented yet. In 1844, people relied on news reporter correspondents to get their news. Many stories were not confirmed for authenticity soon enough. In spite of that fact, the hoax only lasted one day.

Readers of the Sun were fooled into thinking Balloon Victoria embarked to Paris from England. The navigators had trouble with their propeller and their balloon was forced by heavy winds to head toward the Atlantic Ocean until they were able to land on Sullivan Island, which is very close to South Carolina.

Why New Yorkers believed the Victoria Balloon journey was a documented event.

The Sun's promotion of the event looked like the billing of a P.T. Barnum circus poster. Certain words were emphasized in large bold letters. In 1842, Barnum met 25 inch and five year-old midget, Charles Sherwood Stratton. Barnum visited his Bridgeport, Connecticut home, and with support from Charles' father, the kid was nick named Tom Thumb. In 1843, Tom Thumb and Barnum toured America. Tom Thumb was trained to perform, crack jokes, and impersonated Napoleon. In 1844, they toured England and performed for Queen Victoria at Buckingham Palace.

It's an Interesting choice that Poe's fictitious balloon was named Victoria. Barnum's circus museum was located in New York City. The people had a hunger for sensationalism.

The opening of Poe's story mentions that they were able to relay the details of the expedition through their agent, Mr. Forsyth. It implies to the readers that an investigative reporter had exclusive knowledge to a private event.

The characters Mr. Monck Mason and Robert Holland were credible explorers. In 1836, they navigated a hot air balloon originating from London to Weilburg, Germany. The following year, Mason wrote about his detailed journey in a travel log book, entitled *Account of the Late*

Aeronautical Expedition from London to Weilburg.

The Sun published passages from a make-believe diary written by Victoria navigators. The fictitious account reported that a hot air balloon was spotted near the coast of South Carolina. Edgar Allan Poe adapted *The Balloon Hoax* from a regular diary that belonged to Mr. Monck Mason and Mr. Henry Ainsworth. Poe used them as a reference point; they were authorities on the construction and aviation of hot air balloons. It helped convey the illusion of authenticity.

There is no doubt people were impressed with the illustration that appeared in the article, *Steering Balloon Victoria.* Poe sketched the illustration from an 1843 pamphlet that was entitled *Remarks on the Ellipsoidal Balloon, propelled by the Archimedean Screw, described as the New Aerial Machine.*

Poe's writing style was ingenious. He carefully considered wind velocity's effect on his ellipsoidal balloon and stressed the importance of its measurement and weight. He occasionally made reference to the 8 travelers boarding Balloon Victoria. Strong winds made them all vote on changing directional navigation. The narrator constantly checked on the balloon's navigational instruments, propeller, guiding rope, turning screw, vanes, and ballasts. Readers were able to identify with the characters on board.

Any kind of flight was amazing to New Yorkers at the time. Floating vehicles such as hot air balloons were experimented with before airplanes. The first zeppelin airship was constructed in 1900. The Wright brothers flew the first airplane three years later. Alcock and Brown were British aviators and successfully embarked on a non-stop flight over the Atlantic Ocean in 1919. But it wasn't until 1978, that *Double Eagle II* became the first non-powered balloon navigated by man through a 6 day flight across the Atlantic Ocean. It achieved the altitude that Poe had boasted about in his story, 25,000 feet.

Edgar Allan Poe's Illustrious Career

Edgar Allan Poe (1809-1849) American writer, poet, and literary critic, was talented, eccentric, and an alcoholic. A short story entitled *The Purloined Letter* published in 1844 earned him the distinction as father of the detective story. *The Murders in the Rue Morgue* was published in 1841, three years earlier, and introduced Poe's popular detective, C. Auguste Dupin. Some literary critics regard it as the first detective story.

Literary judges awarded Poe $50 for his story, *MS. Found in a Bottle*. He was the winning contestant. *The Baltimore Saturday Visitor* published it October 19,1833.

Poe developed his own stories and became a harsh book critic for the *Southern Literary Messenger.* Anthologist and editor, Rufus Griswold, was angry that Poe wrote a bad review of his *The Poets and Poetry of America*; Poe insisted Griswold included mediocre poets in "the January 1843 edition of *The Philadelphia Saturday Museum*." Griswold wrote a defaming biography that highlighted Poe's characteristic flaws: mentally unstable alcoholic and gambler among them.

The Evening Mirror published Poe's dark poem, *The Raven*, January 29, 1845. The New York publication had changed it's name, previously entitled The *New York Mirror* from 1823-1842. In 1845, the poem was reprinted in *American Review* and *The Liberator*, gaining enormous attention. It helped him became famous in America and all over the world.

The Unparalleled Adventures of One Hans Pfaall (June 1835)

Poe's first attempt to fool people failed. He wrote about a man who studied revolutionary balloon navigation. He constructed a scientific vacuum device that enabled him and kittens to breath atmosphere in space. Pfaall flew to the moon to escape his creditors. The penniless bellows-mender lived with lunar people for five years and sent one of them to earth on another balloon to deliver a note for him. The thief wanted the Burgomaster to pardon him for murdering three annoying creditors in exchange for his incredible tale. But the Lunar messenger was only two feet tall and frightened by all of the people standing on earth; he navigated his balloon back up into the clouds.

Poe's story was published in the *Southern Literary Messenger*. He joked around with the idea of the public thinking an actual note was dropped from a floating balloon and sent by a moon traveler. Poe was outdone by another moon hoax that was published by the New York Sun, *The Great Moon Hoax* of 1835. The Sun announced to readers that life was discovered on the moon. The telescope invented was so powerful that the astronomer, Sir John Herschel, detected insect life on the moon and winged bat-men. The bat-men appeared in the production of lithographic prints that were purchased by the public. Publicity for the story was so successful that Poe abandoned his moon travel stories. He also understood the public wasn't deceived by his "tone of banter." Teunissen and Hinz claim in their article *Poe's The Journal of Jules Rodman as a Parody* that Poe's "elaborate puns on titles and names make the work too obviously a hoax."

Poe criticized *The Great Moon Hoax*. He claimed the moon description terminology couldn't have been written by an authentic astronomer. Later on, Poe enjoyed a good laugh with his fictitious story, *The Balloon Hoax of 1844*, published by the same publication.

The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym (1837)

The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym is such a strange novel that people thought they read fiction. Arthur Gordon Pym is a polar explorer who believes the earth is hollow and occupied by another civilization. He heard lectures from newspaper editor, Jeremiah N. Reynold, explore the credibility of "hollow-earth theorists John Cleves Symmes." Poe was also inspired by the polar traveling Wilkes Expedition and their plans to embark on a voyage through South America and Antarctica during the late 1830's. *Southern Literary Messenger* published The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym as serialized fiction in 1837. Poe republished it in novel form and included a preface that Pym's adventure was an actual nonfiction narrative.

Literary critics weren't thrilled with Poe's first complete novel; they thought it was too horribly repugnant and they accused him of plagiarism.

Poe wrote excellent scientific descriptions in his story. Pym gave insight about the penguins

and albatross birds they saw on Kerguelen Land. Precise navigational coordinates about sailing vessel's location in the ocean were always noted; each of the ships were described with great visual imagery.

Poe's novel included shark attacks, mutiny, three shipwrecks, rescue, and encounters with black savages that betrayed Pym and his men aboard a Captain's ship.

Poe does an excellent job writing about struggling conflicts that ocean voyagers suffer and the nonfiction aspects of the story are solid. But Poe wasn't considered the best american horror writer for nothing. The first boat Pym embarks on becomes a total wreck because of severe weather conditions at sea. He and a few companions are dying of thirst and hunger. They practically cling to their life on a raft! Pym gets excited about sighting an upcoming Dutch trading ship. But he smells revolting decay. He recognizes a figure standing next to the bow ropes near a catwalk. As the ship comes within twenty feet of them, Pym's crew get a close-up view of a large sea gull feasting on the man's face. The corpse falls overboard into the ocean and Pym sees that the man's eyes are hollow and the face has no flesh. A cargo of around thirty dead corpses are on board the Dutch ship and many are female. Pym thinks they perished because of yellow fever or some unknown illness.

Pym's personal struggle for lack of food and water is sustained throughout the entire novel. The Boston ship can't survive furious gales and many of the men and provisions are thrown overboard. Pym and his four companions take turns being lowered down a damaged storeroom to bring up provisions. They're able to bring up bottled olives, a bottle of wine, and a large ham but part of it is spoiled. Pym is cautious eating the ham because he knows it will make him terribly thirsty and water is scarce. The critics thought Pym's voyage and personal struggle too far fetched and difficult to believe.

At one point in the story, Parker suggested one of the four surviving members sacrifice himself for the good of the team. Pym was appalled by the suggestion but opened up to it upon reflection. Parker thought up the idea of cannibalism and is the one that drew the shortest stick. The reading public were horrified about the concept of cannibalism and especially in the late 1830's.

The novel ends on a fantastical suggestion. Pym and Peters escape a black native tribe that plunder Captain Guy's ship and their crewman. They sail southward on a canoe and experience feeling hot water, vapor rising, ash material building around them, and witness a chasm opening up. They're greeted by a giant human figure white as snow. This type of tale reminds some people of the legend of the Abominable Snowman. But the creature was associated with Tibet and the Himalaya Mountains. Some earlier mythological origins of it existed before Poe's novel and some other stories about the Abominable Snowman were written after 1837.

The Journal of Julius Rodman (1840)

Poe penned a fictitious narrative about an explorer named Julius Rodman who led a 1792 expedition through the Missouri River and traveled far north. It would have made him the first European explorer to cross the Rocky Mountains. Poe twisted facts from Washington Irving's

Astoria and Lewis and Clark's *History of the Expedition* to make his story seem more authentic. The Journal of Julius Rodman was published as a serial in *Burton's Gentleman's Magazine* and ran from January to June in 1840.

John J. Teunissen and Evelyn J. Hinz, authors of an article entitled Poe's *Journal of Julius Rodman as Parady*, consider Poe's narrative a parody instead of plagarism. It was Poe's third attempt at fooling the reading public with a hoax. Poe wrote the journal in two parts; the first part is about Rodman's narrative, and the second part is about the editor's perspective. The editors convince readers that Rodman made "the first successful attempt to cross the Rocky Mountains." They claim other explorers were mistakenly given credit. Washington Irving's Astoria credited Captain Carver, but MacKenzie accomplished the mission first in 1793. The editors also discredited Lewis and Clarke. They credited Rodman for preceding all of them in 1792.

The journal explores western wilderness travel writing. Poe's main character was only five feet, four inches tall. He had a strong build and bowed legs. His lips were thin and he had a "saturnine expression." Readers were more able to identify with a character that didn't have the stature of a Greek god. Rodman's Expedition delves into beaver dam building, fur trading, wild animal hunting, buffalo herd drowning, botanical discoveries, dangerous brown bear encounters, and conflicts with Teton and Sioux Indians.

Poe's attention to detail fooled Congress to authenticate the document in their papers of 1839. U.S. Senator, Robert Greenhow, acknowledged there were explorers that traveled through the "American Continent" and were led by Julius Rodman through the years 1791 to 1794. He mentioned that the journal was discovered in Virginia and scheduled for publication in a Philadelphia periodical magazine.

The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar (1845)

American Whig Review's December 1845 edition published a story in which a professional hypnotist attempts to save his dying friend through hypnosis. The man remains unchanged after 7 months of being under a trance but when the hypnotist snaps him out of it he perishes into a liquid mass. Some people actually thought it was a true story. Careful attention must be paid attention to the title, *The Facts in the Case of M. Valdemar*. It suggests the literary piece is a case that examines facts. The first paragraph opens with the intention of clearing up factual information that was distorted.

Numerous reprints of the story gained popularity in America and Europe.

Robert Collyer, a successful Boston hypnotist defended Poe's hypnotic experiment on Valdemar. Collyer claimed to have revived a drunken dead man.

A correspondent from Scotland contacted Poe about the truthful accuracy of the experiment. Poe responded, "Hoax is precisely the word suited to M. Valdemar's case."

A German named Franz Anton Mesmer(1734-1815) practiced a medical therapy that healed sick patients suffering from lack of blood flow. He believed blood flow could be stimulated

through different areas of the body by applying an electrical charge from a human hand or wand. The technique would put the patient in a hypnotic trance. Mesmer was considered a quack at the time. But mesmerism influenced a new type of hypnotism. Poe's short story is based on an actual medical experiment and he used medical termonology to convey realism.

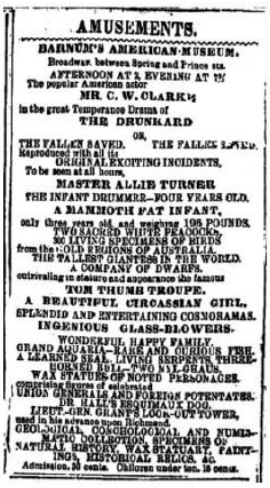
Von Kempelen and His Discovery (1849)

The Flag of our Union's 1849 April edition published an article entitled, *Von Kempelen and his Discovery*. Poe wrote a fictitious story about a German chemist who experimented with a miraculous chemical process that turned ordinary lead into valuable gold. The article claims the value of lead increased 200 percent in Europe. The public probably doubted Poe's story was on the level. In truth, the article was a piece of short fiction. Poe hoped to distract 49rs from gold digging in California.

Poe wrote an optimistic letter to his publisher Evert A. Duyckinck; he boasted that nine out of ten people would believe his story was factual, but no historical records substantiate that public opinion was fooled by Poe's hoax.

Conclusion

Some of the hoaxes schemed by Edgar Allan Poe were ridiculous. He doubted all the people would be taken in by them, either. But as a literary critic he fought his competition and cast doubt on them as well. He wrote natural scientific descriptions although his characters were often trapped in unbelievable situations. *The Balloon Hoax* of 1844 stirred the imagination and hearts of the public. Americans were hungry to discover new worlds and invent miraculous machines, a dream that is still alive today. Many of the future concepts written by authors such as Edgar Allan Poe had an incredible way of becoming true.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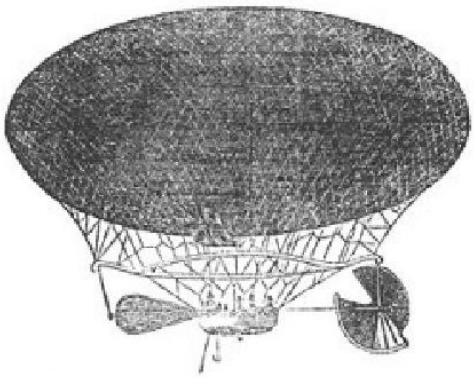

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In October of 1890, along the railway line running through Pulaski County and into the Sloans Valley tunnel, two trains collided in one of the most horrific train wrecks in Kentucky history. Seven people died and dozens more were seriously injured when a freight train collided with a passenger train that was halfway through the Sloans Valley Tunnel. Ever since that night, mysterious lights have been seen around the railroad tracks in the valley.

October 30, 1890 was already a bad night for railroads in Kentucky, even before the Sloans Valley wreck. It was another wreck, this one at Elihu Station near Somerset, that started the chain of events that ended in the deadly Sloan Valley collision. Earlier in the day, a freight train had run into another train as that one was leaving Elihu Station. One man was killed in the wreck, and the damage and confusion shut down tracks for miles around.

The two trains that collided in the Valley that evening were the northbound Freight Train No. 22 and the Southbound Passenger No. 5. Both trains had been significantly delayed by the wreck at Elihu Station. No. 5 was one of two regularly scheduled passenger trains that were to head south on that line that evening. These trains normally ran an hour apart, but both had been held at Somerset and were running close behind one another. When northbound freight was sidetracked south of the tunnel to allow the first passenger train to pass, the engineer either forgot about the other train or mistook the first freight for the No. 5. As soon as the other train had passed, No. 22 pulled back onto the main line and started heading north, not knowing that No. 5 was heading southbound on the same line.

The two trains collided head on in the Sloan Valley tunnel. The boilers on both engines exploded, and the tunnel rapidly filled with fire. The air being drawn into the tunnel acted like a bellows, pouring more oxygen onto the flames and essentially turning the tunnel into a blast furnace. The only stoke of god fortune that night was that the passenger train had not completely entered the tunnel, and three of the sleeper cars attached to the rear of the train were sitting outside the tunnel. The frightened passengers poured into the back of the train and out through these exposed cars. Had No. 5 been just a few hundred feet more down the track, the death toll would have been much, much higher.

Soon after the wreck, reports began emerging about strange lights being seen along the tracks and mournful cries coming from within the tunnel. The lights seem to be most frequently seen at the northern end of the tunnel. They're described as bright lights that move irregularly, swinging back and forth like someone running with a lantern. Whenever someone approaches the lights they disappear. Often, when the lights are seen, the sound of wailing and crying can be heard coming from within the tunnel.

It seems as if the memory of that horrible night was burned into the walls of the Sloans Valley Tunnel. The ground itself seems to be reliving the night of that horrible accident, with the lights of the rescuers swinging around the entrance to the tunnel, trying desperately to get inside the burning train, as the panicked cries of the passengers still echo in the night.

Sloans Valley Tunnel is located near the Cumberland River at the Western edge of Daniel Boone Natonal Forest. The lights are most often seen in late October and Early November when the weather is clear and dry.

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The smart mouse with the half-human brain

2014-12-01T12:45:00Z newscientist.com

What would Stuart Little make of it? Mice have been created whose brains are half human. As a result, the animals are smarter than their siblings.

The idea is not to mimic fiction, but to advance our understanding of human brain diseases by studying them in whole mouse brains rather than in dishes.

The altered mice still have mouse neurons – the "thinking" cells that make up around half of all their brain cells. But practically all the glial cells in their brains, the ones that support the neurons, are human.

"It's still a mouse brain, not a human brain," says Steve Goldman of the University of Rochester Medical Center in New York. "But all the non-neuronal cells are human."

Rapid takeover

Goldman's team extracted immature glial cells from donated human fetuses. They injected them into mouse pups where they developed into astrocytes, a star-shaped type of glial cell.

Within a year, the mouse glial cells had been completely usurped by the human interlopers. The 300,000 human cells each mouse received multiplied until they numbered 12 million, displacing the native cells.

"We could see the human cells taking over the whole space," says Goldman. "It seemed like the mouse counterparts were fleeing to the margins."

Astrocytes are vital for conscious thought, because they help to strengthen the connections between neurons, called synapses. Their tendrils (see image) are involved in coordinating the transmission of electrical signals across synapses.

Human astrocytes are 10 to 20 times the size of mouse astrocytes and carry 100 times as many tendrils. This means they can coordinate all the neural signals in an area far more adeptly than mouse astrocytes can. "It's like ramping up the power of your computer," says Goldman.

Intelligence leap

A battery of standard tests for mouse memory and cognition showed that the mice with human astrocytes are much smarter than their mousy peers.

In one test that measures ability to remember a sound associated with a mild electric shock, for example, the humanised mice froze for four times as long as other mice when they heard the sound, suggesting their memory was about four times better. "These were whopping effects," says Goldman. "We can say they were statistically and significantly smarter than control mice."

Goldman first reported last year that mice with human glial cells are smarter. But the human cells his team injected then were mature so they simply integrated into the mouse brain tissue and stayed put.

This time, he injected the precursors of these cells, glial progenitor cells, which were able to divide and multiply. That, he says, explains how they were able to take over the mouse brains so completely, stopping only when they reached the physical limits of the space.

Species cross

"It would be interesting to find out whether the human astrocytes function the same way in the mice as they do in humans," says Fred Gage, a stem cell researcher at the Salk Institute in La Jolla, California. "It would show whether the host modifies the fate of cells, or whether the cells retain the same features in mice as they do in humans," he says.

"That the cells work at all in a different species is amazing, and poses the question of which properties are being driven by the cell itself and which by the new environment," says Wolfgang Enard of Ludwig-Maximilians University Munich in Germany, who has shown that mice are better at learning if they have the human *Foxp2* gene, which has been linked with human language development.

In a parallel experiment, Goldman injected immature human glial cells into mouse pups that were poor at making myelin, the protein that insulates nerves. Once inside the mouse brain, many of the human glial cells matured into oligodendrocytes, brain cells that specialise in making the insulating material, suggesting that the cells somehow detected and compensated for the defect.

This could be useful for treating diseases in which the myelin sheath is damaged, such as multiple sclerosis, says Goldman, and he has already applied for permission to treat MS patients with the glial progenitor cells, and hopes to start a trial in 12 to 15 months.

Still a mouse

To explore further how the human astrocytes affect intelligence, memory and learning, Goldman is already grafting the cells into rats, which are more intelligent than mice. "We've done the first grafts, and are mapping distributions of the cells," he says.

Although this may sound like the work of science fiction – think *Deep Blue Sea*, where researchers searching for an Alzheimer's cure accidently create super-smart sharks, or Algernon, the lab mouse who has surgery to enhance his intelligence, or even the pigoons, Margaret Atwood's pigs with human stem cells – and human thoughts – Goldman is quick to dismiss any idea that the added cells somehow make the mice more human.

"This does not provide the animals with additional capabilities that could in any way be ascribed or perceived as specifically human," he says. "Rather, the human cells are simply improving the efficiency of the mouse's own neural networks. It's still a mouse."

However, the team decided not to try putting human cells into monkeys. "We briefly

considered it but decided not to because of all the potential ethical issues," Goldman says.

Enard agrees that it could be difficult to decide which animals to put human brain cells into. "If you make animals more human-like, where do you stop?" he says.

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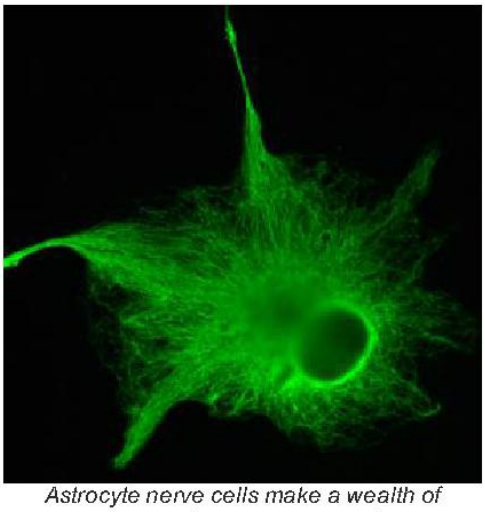

Astrocyte nerve cells make a wealth of connections (Image: Riccardi Cassiani Ingoni/SPL)

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The Salt River flows from Persimmon Knob in Boyle county, slowly winding its way across the state until it drains into the Ohio river near West Point. In the days when river transportation drove the markets of Kentucky, it was a busy path that took people and goods from the Appalachians to the Ohio, and then down the Mississippi to New Orleans and the ocean. But these days the river that once connected Eastern Kentucky to the rest of the world has gone quiet, and it's value is seen less as a source of pure commerce than as a shelter for a number of rare plants and animals that live along its banks. But something else dwells in this river.

Ever since the early settlers of Kentucky found their way to its banks in the 18th Century, thee have been reports of a something strange and beautiful that calls the Salt River its home. For during the night, in the headwaters of the Salt River near Parksville, the mysterious sound of a woman's voice singing is heard coming from the river.

The sound has been reported by travelers and residents near the river for over two centuries. They describe the voice as clear, quiet, and unbelievably sad and beautiful, singing a soft song whose words are indistinct, and whose language no one seems to know. The singing in heard most often during the summer, and particularly on nights where there is no moon. On such nights, when the slow-moving waters of the river flow in darkness, a lucky wandered along its banks may hear the voice calling out to him. An even luckier traveller may see the spirit singing it.

For on rare occasions, men who have heard the song of the river have said that they have seen a beautiful woman, with beautiful soft brown skin and long, black hair rising from the river, looking up towards the sky and singing her song.

One such report comes from the journal of an late 18th century settler that's been passed down for generations by a family in Parksville. In its pages, it tells the story of a tired and hungry pioneer who had crossed over the Appalachians looking to find his fortune in Kentucky. He had come across the mountains, scouting out land for a farm and hunting and trapping furs to sell for funds for his new home as he went. His only companion on his travels was his faithful hound dog, who bounded happily beside him during the day and slept beside him during the cold nights.

It was on one of these nights that the man found himself camping by the banks of the Salt River. As his fire died down and he settled under his blanket for the night, he noticed that his dog was whimpering and pacing fretfully. He tried to get her to settle down, but the poor animal became more and more nervous, disturbed by something in the darkness. As he scratched her head and tried to calm her, the man heard the singing begin.

It was a slow, beautiful sound, and the first voice apart from his own that the man had heard for months. It was also the most lovely voice the man had ever heard.

Following the sound of the voice, the man made his way along the banks of the river with his

dog close on his heels, her tail tucked between her legs. As he rounded a bend, he saw the pale moonlight twinkling on the water, but then her remembered that there was no moon.

The light was coming from the middle of the river, where it shone from no source he could see but seemed to hang in the air, shimmering off a faint form in the water. He was astounded as he saw the form come into focus as young woman. She was waist-deep in the river, standing naked and unashamed, and singing up to the moonless sky. He thought he might be dreaming. He was astounded. Not only was this first woman he had seen in months, but she was also the most beautiful woman he had ever seen, and although she only seemed to be waist-deep in the river, she emerged form the middle of the river where the water should have been twice as deep as her head.

He kept quiet and inched closer, dragging his nervous hound along with him. Hiding behind the bushes, he could see her quite clearly, and he struggled to make out the words she was singing. But he could't make out out the details of the song, only that it was the saddest and most captivating song he had ever heard.

The whole situation was too much for the poor hound, who finally began barking at the spirit. Hearing the animal, the woman turned and looked at the mad and he saw her sad, jet-black eyes. She gave him a wistful look, and silence fell as the lights faded and she disappeared under the waters.

The man returned to his campsite where he spent a sleepless night, and later her returned to Parksville where he built his home. He eventually took a wife and started a family, and on moonlit nights he would go out hunting with his dog, but on the nights when there was no moon he would silently slip away from his wife and children, leaving his hound at home, and silently walk by the banks of the Salt River.

The Spirit of the Salt River has been heard many times since then, and occasionally someone out on the river at night has seen her form.

Who is this lovely siren who haunts the river? Is the spirit of one of the Indian Nations whose lands and lives were lost to the settlers? Is she something older, something from before even the Indians walked the Kentucky hills? Whatever she is, she's part of the landscape of Kentucky and the story of her mystery and her beauty continues to inspire Kentuckians to this day. A small theater company based in nearby Danville, Salt River Shakespeare, takes its name from the river and its company mascot an image that they say represents the Spirit of the Salt River.

So if you're wandering near the river in Boyle County on a moonless night, stop to listen to sound of the water you may hear the Salt River Spirit singing to you.

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Gimghoul (or "Hippol") Castle and the story of Peter Drumgoole: Chapel Hill, NC

Posted on Thu - Apr 4th, 2013by NC-CulturePosted in Of Special Interest

Gimghoul Castle

el gimghoul extra good 2

Every Chapel Hill child grows up with the story of Peter Drumgoole and the "blood on the rock" ringing in their ears. In the spring of 1833, Peter Drumgoole, a Virginia native attending school at UNC-CH, met and fell in love with a young woman named Fanny. They often met at the rock overlooking the steepness of Chapel Hill. Fanny, being an attractive young woman, was also being pursued by another gentleman, and rivalry flared when the two men bumped shoulders on campus one day. A duel was declared, and at midnight, they two met at the rock. After pacing off the required ten steps, shots rang, and Peter Drumgoole lay on the ground.

Gimghoul Castle

This is where the story begins to take a turn. In some versions, Peter's friends quickly dug a shallow grave and buried Peter close to where he fell. Another variation is that he is actually buried under the rock with the blood stains.

In other versions of Peter's disappearance, Peter fled university life and enlisted in the Army. However, muster rolls containing Peter's name have never been located.

In both versions, though, apparently Fanny was not present when the duel commenced. Some say she returned to the rock over and over, waiting patiently day in and day out, for Peter to return to her. Others say she heard about the duel, and arrived in time for Peter to dye in her arms, and the blood splatter from the duel is what caused the "blood on the rock", stained for all time. The picture above is not of the actual rock, as the rock is now blocked by shrubbery, but does give you an idea of the size of the boulders outlining the property.

Gimghoul Castle: windows: Chapel Hill, NC

Gimghoul Castle, Chapel Hill, NC

Despite all the stories and myths surrounding Gimghoul, the truth is that work on the castle began in the early 1920s, and contrary to what us schoolchildren were told, it was built on site from 1,300 tons of stones (not transported stone by stone across the ocean), and is actually home to the "Order of Gimghoul", a secret society for the University, and was founded in 1889 by Robert Bingham, Shepard Bryan, and several other notable students at that time. Membership is by invitation only, and the society is modeled on "Arthurian knights and chivalry". The grounds themselves are the property of a non-profit called "Order of the Gimghoul", and is located very near campus and the Forest Theatre.

el gimghoul rock

Gimghoul Castle, Chapel Hill, NC

As a child, climbing the steep hill thru the woods to Lover's Leap, one of our "do you dare" escapades included touching the blood on the rock. We did notice on our recent visit that shrubbery surrounding the rock has grown to where you cannot actually get a good picture, as the grounds themselves are not open to the public. You can view the castle from the loop dirt road, or you can park and walk down a very short side path to the Lover's Leap for a view of the back of the castle.

Whatever you do, please respect the Order's wishes and do not venture inside the stone enclosure around the castle, and all of this is publicly marked.

Shooting Gimghoul Castle from Lover's Leap: Pam Padgett, and Kevin Senter, photographer

Gimghoul Castle

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Journalist Dan De Quille published an article in the *Territorial Enterprise* on October 26, 1867, describing some stones with a curious property. Whenever separated from each other, these stones, which he said had recently been discovered in Nevada's Pahranagat Valley, spontaneously moved back together.

The article, written in a semi-scientific style, was a joke, but De Quille discovered that a lie once told cannot easily be untold. Years later, despite efforts to expose his own hoax, he was still receiving letters from people wanting to know more details about the traveling stones. One German scientist, upon learning from De Quille that the article was a hoax, refused to believe it and accused De Quille of trying to conceal the truth from his fellow scientists.

Text of the Article

The text of the article read:

TRAVELING STONES— Some years ago, a prospector who had been roaming through the Pahranagat Mountains, the wildest and most sterile portion of southeastern Nevada, brought back with him a great curiosity in the shape of a number of traveling stones. The stones were almost perfectly round, the majority of them as large as a hulled walnut, and very heavy, being of an irony nature. When scattered about on the floor, on a table, or other level surface, within two or three feet of each other, they immediately began traveling toward a common center, and then huddled up in a bunch like a lot of eggs in a nest. A single stone removed to a distance of a yard, upon being released, at once started off with wonderful and somewhat comical celerity to rejoin its fellows; but if taken away four or five feet, it remained motionless.

The man who was in possession of these traveling stones said that he found them in a region of country that, though comparatively level, is nothing but bare rock. Scattered about in this rocky plain are a great number of little basins, from a few feet to two or three rods in diameter, and it is in the bottom of these basins that the rolling stones are found. In the basins they are seen from the size of a pea to five or six inches in diameter. These curious pebbles appeared to be formed of a loadstone or magnetic iron ore.

Reaction

The short article didn't cause much of a reaction at first, but unbeknownst to its author, word of the rambling rocks was spreading around the world as foreign papers reprinted it. Soon letters about the footloose geological wonder began arriving in De Quille's mailbox. There were just a few letters, at first. Curiosity seekers requesting more information. But over time the volume of stone-mail grew greater and greater.

Wells Drury, an editor who knew De Quille, later remembered that when news of the Traveling Stones reached Germany "it caused a furor among a select set of men who were

dabbling in the study of electro-magnetic currents. Their secretary wrote to Dan demanding further details. In vain he disclaimed the verity of his skit. His denial was treated as an unprofessional attempt to keep his brother scientists in ignorance of the truth concerning natural laws, the effects of which they were convinced had been first observed and recorded by 'Herr Dan De Quille, the eminent physicist of Virginia-stadt, Nevada.'"

Reportedly P.T. Barnum also offered De Quille $10,000 if he would go on tour with the rocks. De Quille had to decline the offer. And still the letters kept coming.

On March 31, 1872 De Quille wrote in the *Enterprise* that he had received a request for a large amount of the Traveling Stones. He also described his response:

About six years ago an account of certain curious rolling stones was published in the Enterprise. The item has been going the rounds ever since without any one being able to suggest any plan by which money might be made out of them. A request has recently come to the local postmaster for five pounds of the stones... We have none of said rolling stones in this city at present but would refer our Colorado speculator to Mark Twain, who probably has still on hand fifteen or twenty bushels of assorted sizes.

Attempt to end the hoax

De Quille's strategy of trying to direct stone seekers toward Mark Twain evidently didn't work, because seven years later he was still receiving letters about the stones, which motivated him, on November 11, 1879, to publish a plea, beseeching everyone not to bother him anymore about the peregrinating pebbles:

In an idle moment, some fifteen years ago, this deponent concocted and wrote an item entitled "Traveling Stones." The stones were said to have been brought from the Pahranagat country, (because little was then known of that region and it was not easy of access) where they were found in shallow basins in the rock. They were round, and ranged in size from those no bigger than a buckshot up to such as were the size of a ten-pin ball. They were evidently largely composed of magnetic iron ore, and when spread out on the floor or other level surface would all run and huddle together like a covey of quail, though when one was removed too far from its mates it could not get back.

The story of the little traveling stones seemed to supply a want that had long been felt—to fit exactly and fill a certain vacant nook in the minds of men—and they traveled through all the newspapers of the world. This we did not so much mind, nor were we much worried by letters of inquiry at first, but it has now been some years since we ceased to enjoy them. First and last, we must have had bushels of letters asking about these stones. Letter after letter have we opened from foreign parts in the expectation of hearing something to our advantage—that half a million had been left us somewhere or that somebody was anxious to pay us four bits a column for sketches about the mountains and mines—and have only found some other man wanting to know all about those traveling stones.

So it has gone on all these fifteen years. Our last is from Tiffin, Ohio, dated Nov.3, and

received yesterday. His name is Haines, and he wants to know all about those stones, could he obtain several and how? Not long since we had a letter from a man in one of the New England States who informed us that there was big money in the traveling stones. We were to send him a carload, when he would exhibit and sell them, dividing the spoils with us. We have stood this thing about fifteen years, and it is becoming a little monotonous. We are now growing old, and we want peace. We desire to throw up the sponge and acknowledge the corn; therefore we solemnly affirm that we never saw or heard of any such diabolical cobbles as the traveling stones of Pahranagat—though we still think there ought to be something of the kind somewhere in the world. If this candid confession shall carry a pang to the heart of any true believer we shall be glad of it, as the true believers have panged it to us, right and left, quite long enough.

De Quille never again wrote about the Traveling Stones. However, this silence does not mean that his plea actually worked.

- Wells Drury, An Editor on the Comstock Lode. New York, 1936.
- C. Grant Loomis. "The Tall Tales of Dan De Quille." California Folklore Quarterly, 5 (1946): 26-71.
- Dan De Quille. History of the Big Bonanza. American Publishing Company. 1876.

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November 24, 2014

"Timber Tree" is a folksy name for a relatively isolated road that bridges the Gate City/Bristol Highway, in Virginia, with Bloomingdale in Kingsport, Tennessee.

Few were as notorious as the Powell sisters of Scott County, Virginia. Moonshiners feared them and outlaws avoided them. The Powell sisters weren't just wicked or troublesome, legend says they were in league with the devil himself. Their legacy of malevolence lives on nearly two hundred years after their demise. Their legend is known in both southwest Virginia and northeastern Tennessee.

*Drusilla and Irene Powell had always been troublesome, but it wasn't until later in life that their propensity for cruelty emerged. The family noticed that, for some reason, people always ended up fighting when the sisters were around. The fact that they were both married and had children didn't stop them from leaving their families to go away together. No one knew where they went or why they had to go so often.

The sisters were effective midwives in their community, before the real trouble started. Neighbors often asked the sisters for favors, to help them heal from an injury, or just find luck in love or money. It became apparent that those who asked anything of the women soon had a tremendous price to pay. Their "healing" led to violence and misery. Their "luck" led to disease and tragedy.

The two women stopped coming home as often as they once did. Hours away led to days away and finally weeks away. The people in their village saw them even less. Then, the only time they came home was to unleash chaos and anger with their families. They abused their children and grew determined to ruin their husbands through false accusations and rumors. The constant battles became so traumatic for everyone that the families told both women to just stop coming home at all.

No one knew where they went or what they did after that, but they lingered in the darkest parts of the mountain. Trouble followed wherever they went. The women began to draw strange stray dogs. Before long, ten or twelve unusual dogs followed at their heels. Locals were certain they were just strays or runaways, but there was something peculiar about every one. Hunters and trappers began claiming the women didn't have natural relationships with the dogs, or that the animals weren't dogs at all, but demons that did their bidding.

Local farmers could seldom get ahead. Crops died, murrains hit the livestock, and disease struck every family who crossed the women, no matter how innocently. Fortunately, their reign of terror wasn't to last.

One day, something happened with the dogs. Some say they went rabid, while others say it had simply come time for the sisters to pay for their evil. Irene went to draw water from the creek. The dogs attacked Drusilla when she was alone. Drusilla screamed and cried for help,

but no one in the area heard anything. Whatever darkness enveloped the sisters also muted their pleas for help.

By the time Irene returned, her sister was in pieces and their devil dogs had disappeared. She grabbed and old piece of rope and hanged herself from the nearest tree.

The community was relieved to be rid of the curse, but faced with a new set of problems, including what to do with the remains. They were certain the witches' mortal remains were cursed and anyone who attempted to put them in hallowed ground would share their curse.

It was decided to bury them beside the old McMurray cemetery, behind New Hurland church. They buried them on the outskirts of the hallowed ground. Since that time, the whole area has been visited by otherworldly events. People can hear the sisters beating the lids of their coffins to get out. They hear a ghostly wagon bringing a body for burial. Disembodied screams permeate the air as if someone is being torn apart. The strain of an old rope resounds from a nearby oak. The most frequent sound is a female scream that grows louder and louder, as if the woman screaming is running towards the listener.

*** The sisters' actual names have been lost to time.**

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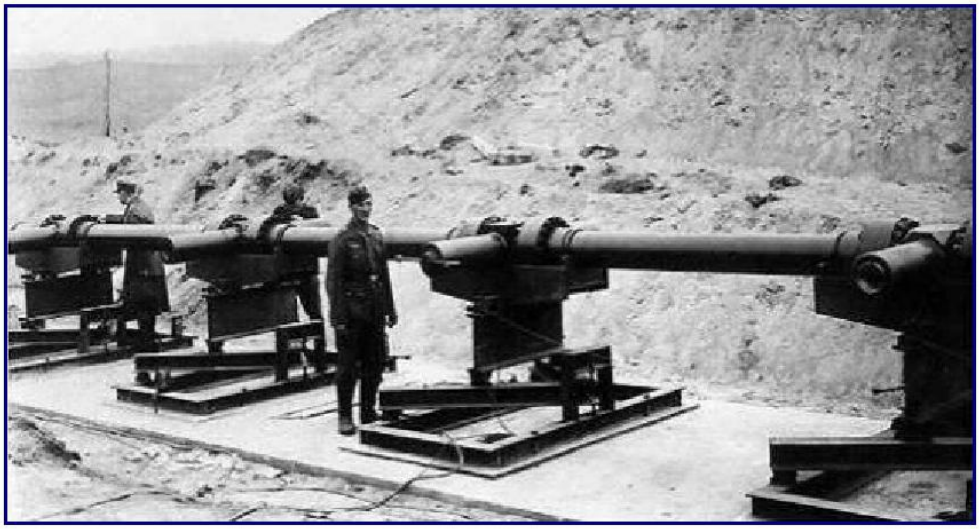

Peashooter85: **The V3 Supergun,**

The third installment of Hitler's vengeance weapons, (the first being the V1 and V2 rockets), the V3 was a large supergun created by the Germans during World War II. At 140 meters long, it could deliver a 140kg (308lb) shell over 165km (102.5 miles). The most unique feature of the gun was that it used multiple charges placed throughout the barrel to help propel the projectile. As the projectile passed through the barrel timed charges would ignite propelling the projectile faster and faster until it left the bore.

While an ingenious design, the V3 cannon were not very practical, mostly because, once constructed they could not be moved without disassembling the entire gun. As a result, the gun could also only fire in one direction. Hitler ordered the construction of 50 such guns all over France, but few were made due to Allied bombing. Two guns were created in northern France to bombard London, but were destroyed by Allied bombers before they could be used. In December of 1944 two guns were secretly built and used to bombard Luxembourg, which was then under Allied control. The bombing lasted until February of 1945, but led to only a few dozen casualties, causing insignificant damage to an army numbering in the millions. The guns were captured at the end of the war and destroyed with dynamite.

Chinese_water_deer_Stuffed_specimen

This is the **Chinese Water Deer**, brought to the UK from China and Korea. It is nicknamed **Vampire Deer** for its protruding tusk-like teeth which grow from the mouth at around 6-7 months of the male deer's life.

They use their tusks as weapons during the rut (a fight between males to form territories with does) and show dominance by displaying them. Despite their large size, only 60% of these tusks are actually visible, with the rest stuck in the gum.

These deer are only slightly bigger than a dog so are not as menacing as you would expect.

There is estimated to be less than 2,100 of these deer in the UK at the moment. However, a recent survey by the British Deer Society suggests they are increasing in population, so you may be seeing more of these deer around in the coming years!

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Photography by

Paul SmithWeirdtwistNational GeographicDr. Txap and Viralnova

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Why Is This Cat Green?

The Huffington Post | By Andres Jauregui huffingtonpost.com

Posted: 12/04/2014 1:44 pm EST Updated: 12/05/2014 1:59 pm EST

green cat

Nice cat, mean cat. Red cat, green cat. Fat cat, thin cat. Synthetic paint cat.

Yes, this cat is green. It wasn't born that way, and apparently, someone didn't intentionally paint it that way, either. According to Rex Media, the bright green cat, which resides on the streets of Varna, Bulgaria, gets its emerald green coloring from sleeping on "an abandoned heap of synthetic green paint in a garage."

Although apparently the cat's true color is up for debate.

Seems legit.

Why no one has cleaned up the mess is another mystery.

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Thousands queue for 'meat stone'

23 October 2014 bbc.com

Last updated at 04:42 ET

Taiwan's meat-shaped stone

Possibly the world's most valuable artistic rendering of a piece of stewed pork

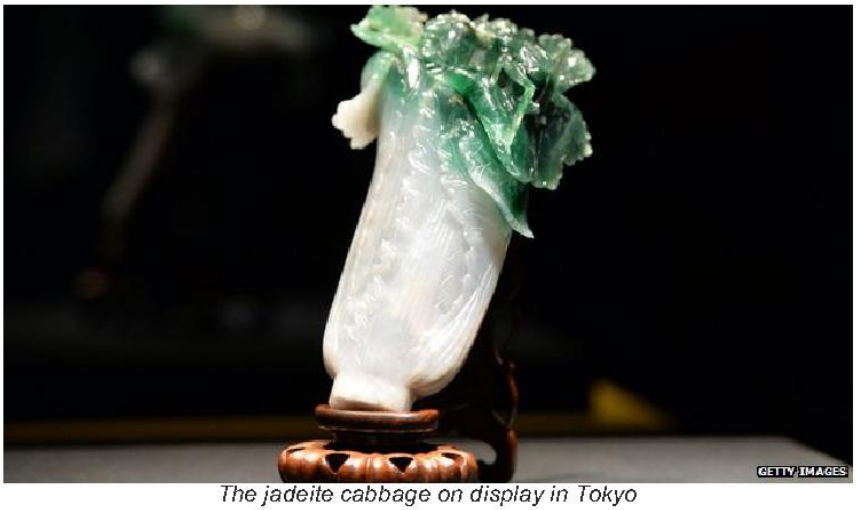
One of Taiwan's more bizarre national treasures is returning home after an exhibition drew thousands of visitors in Japan.

Nearly 84,000 people came to see the famous Meat-Shaped Stone, which was on display at Japan's Kyushu National Museum in the southern city of Fukuoka, the United Daily News reports. The daily average of 5,995 visitors was somewhat lower than a previous exhibition in Tokyo featuring Taiwan's Jadeite Cabbage, which drew 21,000 people per day. But organisers put this down to the Kyushu Museum being less convenient for those wanting to travel to see the meaty treasure.

One of Taiwan's most revered artefacts, the Meat-Shaped Stone is a piece of jasper, carved and dyed to resemble a chunk of stewed pork. According to the National Palace Museum, the craftsman "took the rich natural resources of this stone and carved it with great precision... the veining and hair follicles making the piece appear even more realistic." Carved in jadeite, the cabbage was made during the Qing dynasty, and comes complete with two insects on its leaves. Its display in Tokyo caused a minor diplomatic row after organisers were reluctant to use the word "national" in publicity material, in case it caused offence to Beijing. China claims Taiwan as part of its territory.

Concerns for the Meat-Shaped Stone's safety mean that the Taiwanese museum has kept its travel plans a closely guarded secret. But it's known that it had to undergo a 24-hour period of motionless after it had been packed before it was allowed to travel.

An earlier display featuring the Jadeite Cabbage caused a minor diplomatic row



The jadeite cabbage on display in Tokyo

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Tiger born with no stripes

A snow white Bengal tiger born without stripes is believed to be the only such animal living in the wild.

Keepers at the ranch were delighted when Fareeda and her siblings were born on Christmas Day last year, but even more surprised to see Fareeda's rare lack of markings. Keepers at the ranch were delighted when Fareeda and her siblings were born on Christmas Day last year, but even more surprised to see Fareeda's rare lack of markings. Photo: CATERS Photo: CATERS

The six-month-old cub is so rare it is thought there are fewer than 20 others like it - all in captivity.

The female tiger, which has been named Fareeda, was born to two white Bengal tigers. Fareeda's brother Shahir and sister Sitarah both bear the typical black tiger stripes in common with 99 per cent of their species.

Fareeda, who was hand-reared by keepers at Cango Wildlife Ranch, near Cape Town, South Africa, is part of a unique breeding programme to keep the White Bengal species alive.

Keepers at the ranch were delighted when Fareeda and its siblings were born on Christmas Day last year, but even more surprised to see Fareeda's rare lack of markings.

Odette Claassen, 52, from Cango Wildlife Ranch, said the keepers had to wait six months before they could be sure Fareeda definitely did not have stripes.

She said: "Some cubs develop stripes in their first few months but after six months it's clear that Fareeda is truly one of the rarest of her kind.

"When she was born Fareeda had noticeably pale colour it did cause a stir of excitement amongst the staff.

"But we knew there was the possibility of the cub's very light black and ginger stripes darkening over time existed.

"Most white Bengal tigers are bred in the US from a single male captured in the 1950s, but Fareeda is the first to be born in Africa, which is very special.

"She has a lovely nature and loves playing with her brothers and sisters, although she has nipped me a few times when she wants a feed.

"White Bengal tigers are not albino, they have distinctive blue eyes, and they used to be found in Northern India before they died out.

"My hope is that one day Fareeda and her kind can be returned to their native habitat and that is why it is so important to educate people about tigers and keeping the breeding programmes going."

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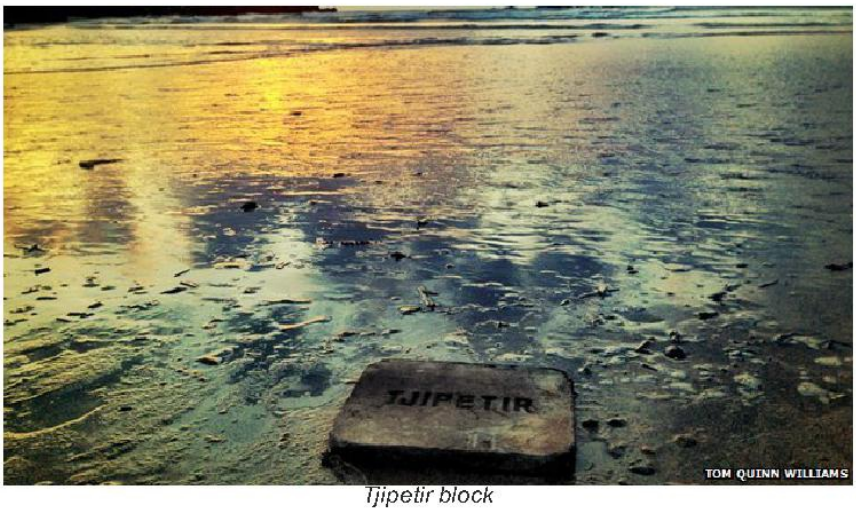
The mystery of the Tjipetir blocks

30November2014

bbc.com



Tjipetir block

For the past few years, 100-year-old rubber-like blocks from Indonesia have been mysteriously washing up on beaches in the UK and northern Europe. The Titanic has been suggested as one of the possible sources - but now a beachcomber says she may have solved the puzzle of the Tjipetir blocks.

In the summer of 2012, Tracey Williams was walking her dog along a beach near her home in Newquay, Cornwall, when she spotted a black tablet on the sand, made of something resembling rubber.

It looked like a large chopping board and the word "Tjipetir" was engraved into it. Weeks later, she found another such curiosity on a different beach alongside bales of rubber, washed up in a cove.

Her curiosity piqued, she began to research the origins of these mysterious blocks. What she learned included stories of shipwrecks, an infamous World War One tragedy and the Titanic.

It also transpired that these blocks had been appearing on beaches across northern Europe, baffling everyone who had found them.

There has been speculation in the press as to the source of the washed-up blocks, with the Daily Mail and the Times recently running articles. The French press covered the story in April also.

But Williams believes she has worked out the source of the mystery - and it matches what the UK authorities think too.

Blocks of gutta-percha in Indonesia

This image appears to show Tjipetir blocks on an Indonesian plantation in the late 19th or early 20th Century

Louise Mamet found this block at Dunes de Sainte Marguerite in Landeda, France

Jan Jacob Westerbeek found this block in Bergen aan Zee in the Netherlands on 8 December 2013

Adam and Marina found a Tjipetir block on a small island, Out Skerries, off Shetland in August

Louise Mamet

The word Tjipetir turned out to be that of a rubber plantation in West Java, Indonesia, which operated in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The blocks were not strictly rubber - they are most likely gutta-percha, the gum of a tree found in the Malay Peninsula and Malaysia. It was used in the 19th and first half of the 20th centuries to insulate telegraph cables on the seabed.

Jan Jacob Westerbeek

Tracey Williams with two washed-up Tjipetir blocks

Before modern plastic began to be widely used, gutta-percha was also made into such items as golf balls, teddy bear noses, picture frames and jewellery, among many others.

Williams began charting her progress on a Facebook page, which led to many people coming forward to reveal their own gutta-percha finds, often made when they were cleaning their local beach.

Adam Adamson and Marina

Tracey Williams

These were not only around England and Wales but also in Shetland, the Channel Islands, Spain, France, the Netherlands, Germany, Norway, Sweden and Denmark.

Along with these blocks, bales and rolls of rubber are also being washed up.

There has been speculation that the gutta-percha could be coming from the wreck of the Titanic. "A French newspaper covered the story and reported that the Titanic had been carrying gutta-percha," Williams said.

"I checked the ship's manifest and discovered that it had indeed been carrying gutta-percha and bales of rubber. There was much wild press speculation about this afterwards."

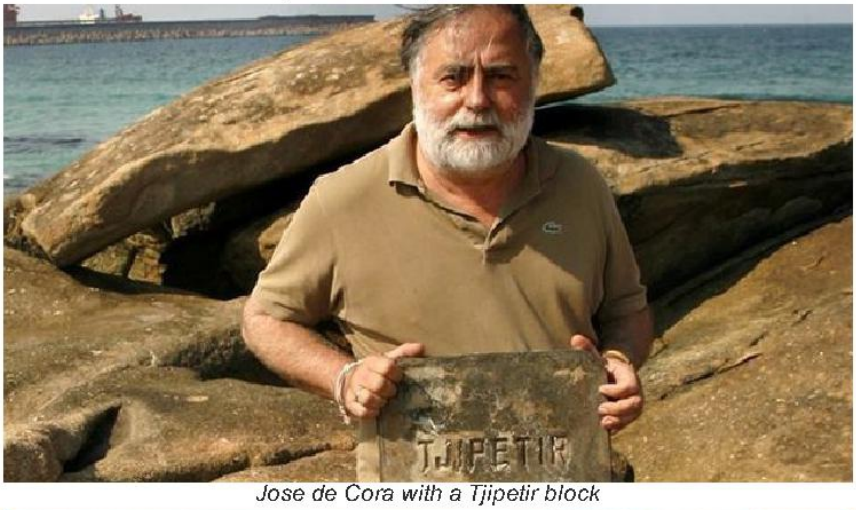
Lisbeth with a Tjipetir block found in March on a beach at the village of Heestrand on the west coast of Sweden.

Jonathan Johansson and his mother Lisbeth (pictured) found a block in March in Heestrand, Sweden Friederike Wegert and her children found a block in March 2013 on Borkum, an island off the German coast Jose de Cora found a Tjipetir block in San Cibrao, north-west Spain in August 2013 Corentin Perrin found this in November at Brem sur Mer in France when he fell on to "curiously hard" water

Then, in the summer of 2013, Williams had a breakthrough.

She was contacted separately by two people - who did not want to be named - and both pinpointed one wreck as the source. They knew of a salvage company carrying out recovery of cargo from Japanese liner the Miyazaki Maru, which had sunk during World War One. It

Friederike Wegert with the Tjipetir block found at Borkum



Jose de Cora with a Tjipetir block

Corentin Perrin

line

had been carrying the Tjipetir blocks.

It sank 150 miles (241.5km) west of the Scilly Isles.

Miyazaki Maru

- Built in 1909 in Kobe, Japan
- Ocean liner of 8,520 tons
- Sunk on 31 May, 1917 during a voyage from Yokohama to London by German submarine U-88
- Was carrying cargo and passengers - eight people died
- Now situated 150 miles (241.5km) west of the Scilly Isles

Source: Wrecksite

"I was told that when salvage work is done, the cargo they are looking for is pulled out in large amounts, and the gutta-percha and rubber bales have been released from the ship's hold as a result," Williams said.

"So both my sources told me that shipwreck is where those items are mainly coming from. I've been shown evidence supporting this."

Walther Schwieger also sank the Lusitania

But Williams isn't the only person who thinks the gutta-percha is coming from the Miyazaki Maru.

The government's Receiver of Wreck, Alison Kentuck, the official who administers wreck and salvage laws within UK territorial waters, also says it is most likely the blocks are indeed

Miyazaki Maru line

cargo from that ship.

"When we are made aware of wreckage we conduct research to find the owner," she said. "We look at the age of the items, where they could have come from and examine any markings.

"Our findings with these particular items pointed towards that particular wreck.

Walther Schwieger

So although we have not confirmed it, the Miyazaki Maru is our favoured possibility as the source of the washed-up blocks."

The Miyazaki Maru was sunk by a German submarine, U-88, captained by Walther Schwieger, one of Germany's most successful U-boat aces.

Schwieger was also in charge of another German U-boat which, in May 1915, sank the RMS Lusitania, a liner bound for Liverpool, carrying 1,924 passengers and crew from New York. That notorious event led to more than 1,100 deaths, including more than 100 Americans and is thought to have hastened the US's entry into the war.

Oceanographer Curtis Ebbesmeyer, who specialises in tracking flotsam, says the Tjipetir blocks may be washing up on beaches for centuries. "Based on the findings so far, they are clearly being fed into the hemispheric ocean circulation. It only takes 25 years for flotsam to go around the world, and they've probably been around long enough to go around the world three times.

"They're still in good condition after all these years, which is unusual. They're probably one of the great pieces of flotsam that people may be finding 100 years from now."

Map

Ebbesmeyer also said various gyres - or ocean currents - may pull the blocks from Spain across to the Americas "mirroring the same route that Columbus took" before possibly ending up in Florida. The ones found in the North Sea "should go up past Norway, turn east past the top of Siberia, go through the Bering Strait into the North Pacific and go all over from there".

Several people have also reported finding Tjipetir blocks back in 2008, before the current salvage operation is thought to have begun on the Miyazaki Maru.

One person has come forward to say they found a block more than 30 years ago and used it as a chopping board to gut fish on their fishing boat.

"Many ships would have been carrying gutta-percha, so it's possible that the cargo is coming from more than one source," says Williams, who is writing a book about the Tjipetir story. "It is being seen as pollution - and I clean debris from my local beaches all the time - but the gutta-percha is a natural product, so it does degrade. I've seen disintegrated blocks on the beach."

"Perhaps other companies are salvaging material from World War One wrecks too. It is possible that some of it is from the Titanic? I don't know."

*Walther Schwieger picture courtesy of the German Federal Archives (*BArch, Bild 134-C1831 */ o.Ang. /* CC-BY-SA 3.0)

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A CREATIVE MARINE - Corporal Tony Stein, U.S. Marine Corps, WW II, Medal of Honor (1921-1945)

hawaiireporter.com

Sunday, February 3rd, 2013 | Posted by Duane Vachon | Print This Article

Corporal Tony Stein, USMC, Medal of Honor, WWII

BY DUANE A. VACHON, PH.D. Corporal Tony Stein was born on September 30, 1921 and raised in Dayton Ohio. In those days Dayton was known as the "Gem City". He attended Kiser High School there. He enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps on September 22, 1942.

After boot camp and airborne training he went to Bougainville and Vella Lavella where he saw an elephant for the first time. During the Bougainville Campaigns, Stein shot five snipers in a single day.

He returned to the States as a Paramarine in the Marine Parachute Regiment. The regiment had a very short life and when it disbanded he was transferred into A Company/1 28th Marines of the newly formed 5th MARDIV. It was with this unit that he took part in the amphibious landings on February 19, 1945, which began the Battle of Iwo Jima . As his unit moved inland, he stormed a series of hostile pillboxes using his ubiquitous "stinger" and made eight trips back to the beach to retrieve ammunition, each time taking a wounded Marine with him. It was for his actions on this day that he was later awarded the Medal of Honor.

In the initial assault he was among the first members of his unit to set up a defensive position away from the beach. There he began to engage Japanese forces with his custom Stinger machinegun. It was from this position that Tony Stein, first-generation Jewish son of Austrian immigrants, made his most famous stand.

Stein's rare and improvised "Stinger" light machine gun was based on the ANM2 Aircraft machinegun. The ANM2 in turn was a totally new weapon based on the venerable 31-pound M1919 light machine gun (which is still in use around the world today). The ANM2 was designed for use as an aircraft mounted weapon and as such was much lighter (by some 30%) and also had a much higher rate of fire (1200-1500 rounds per minute vs. the stock M1919s much slower 400-600). These weapons had been salvaged from wrecked Douglas SBD Dauntless dive bomber aircraft by an intrepid marine armorer who added butt stocks and sights to the weapon from an M1 Garand and the light bipod from the BAR. A toolmaker prior to the war, Stein helped the marine armorer customize a .30 caliber M1919 Browning machine gun from a wrecked Navy fighter plane into a highly effective personal machine gun he nicknamed the "Stinger"

With a 100-round belt carried in an aluminum box magazine it weighed some 25 pounds. It was considered by some to be the best squad automatic weapon of WWII. Only one of these weapons was assigned to Stein's battalion and he drew the lucky straw to carry it.

"The Stinger"

Corporal Tony Stein held his Stinger light machinegun on target and destroyed enemy pillbox after pillbox by charging them alone and destroying the crew inside while firing away with his weapon. The Stinger's extremely high rate of fire and the momentum of the combat led quickly to Stein running out of ammunition. Kicking his shoes off and throwing his M-1 helmet down he ran back to the beach to get more 30 caliber ball for his weapon. As he ran he picked up a wounded fellow Marine and carried him back to the beach to obtain aid. He repeated this feat no less than 8 times, bringing a wounded man back to the beach, grabbing a few belts of ammunition to fire at Japanese pillboxes, and then returning with a smoking weapon and another wounded Marine. Later that day he performed a rear guard action covering his unit's withdrawal.

The 28th Marines next helped capture Mount Suribachi itself, culminating in the raising of the U.S. flag on the mountain's peak on February 23. Stein was wounded during the fight for Suribachi and evacuated to a hospital ship. Meanwhile, his regiment advanced up the west side of the island until reaching the strongly defended Hill 362A, where they took heavy casualties. When Stein heard of this, he left the hospital ship and returned to his unit. On March 1, he was killed by a sniper while leading a 19-man patrol to reconnoiter a machine gun emplacement which had Company A pinned down.

Stein received the U.S. military's highest decoration, the Medal of Honor, for his actions in World War II. He received the award for repeatedly making single-handed assaults against the enemy and for aiding wounded Marines during the initial assault on Iwo Jima on February 19, 1945. He was killed in action ten days later.

Medal of Honor citation

The President of the United States takes pride in presenting the MEDAL OF HONOR posthumously to

CORPORAL TONY STEIN
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS RESERVE

for service as set forth in the following CITATION:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving with Company A, 1st Battalion, 28th Marines, 5th Marine Division, in action against enemy Japanese forces on Iwo Jima, in the Volcano Islands, 19 February 1945. The first man of his unit to be on station after hitting the beach in the initial assault, Cpl. Stein, armed with a personally improvised aircraft-type weapon, provided rapid covering fire as the remainder of his platoon attempted to move into position. When his comrades were stalled by a concentrated machinegun and mortar barrage, he gallantly stood upright and exposed

himself to the enemy's view, thereby drawing the hostile fire to his own person and enabling him to observe the location of the furiously blazing hostile guns. Determined to neutralize the strategically placed weapons, he boldly charged the enemy pillboxes 1 by 1 and succeeded in killing 20 of the enemy during the furious single-handed assault. Cool and courageous under the merciless hail of exploding shells and bullets which fell on all sides, he continued to deliver the fire of his skillfully improvised weapon at a tremendous rate of speed which rapidly exhausted his ammunition. Undaunted, he removed his helmet and shoes to expedite his movements and ran back to the beach for additional ammunition, making a total of 8 trips under intense fire and carrying or assisting a wounded man back each time. Despite the unrelenting savagery and confusion of battle, he rendered prompt assistance to his platoon whenever the unit was in position, directing the fire of a half-track against a stubborn pillbox until he had effected the ultimate destruction of the Japanese fortification. Later in the day, although his weapon was twice shot from his hands, he personally covered the withdrawal of his platoon to the company position. Stouthearted and indomitable, Cpl. Stein, by his aggressive initiative sound judgment, and unwavering devotion to duty in the face of terrific odds, contributed materially to the fulfillment of his mission, and his outstanding valor throughout the bitter hours of conflict sustains and enhances the highest traditions of the U.S. Naval Service.

/S/ HARRY S. TRUMAN

Stein's Medal of Honor was presented to his widow on February 19, 1946, during a ceremony in the office of Ohio Governor Frank Lausche. Stein was initially buried in the 5th Division Cemetery on Iwo Jima. Following the war, his remains were returned to the U.S. for reinterment in his native Dayton. Stein, Dayton's only World War II recipient of the Medal of Honor, was buried with full military honors on December 17, 1948, in Calvary Cemetery following funeral services at Our Lady of the Rosary Church.

Short URL: http://www.hawaiireporter.com/?p=276813

Author: Duane Vachon

Duane A. Vachon PhD is a psychologist and a Secular Franciscan. He has several books published and has had hundreds of articles on social justice and spiritual issues published. His Doctoral thesis on ethics has set the standard at many universities. Reach Dr. Vachon at vachon.duane@gmail.com

Duane Vachon has written 198 articles for us.

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Hot air balloon 'lands in jail'

5 November 2014 bbc.com

Last updated at 07:39 ET

Camels at the Pushkar fair with a hot air balloon in the background

The women had been enjoying a visit to the Pushkar Camel Fair, until they ended up in prison

An Indian hot air balloon ride has landed two tourists in jail, after it was blown off course and drifted into the grounds of a high-security prison, it's reported.

The two women were visiting the annual Pushkar Camel Fair, in the western state of Rajasthan, when they decided to get a bird's eye view of the event. But their balloon ride came to an abrupt end when strong winds caused the operator to bring it down on the football field of nearby Ajmer central jail, the NDTV website reports. The balloon's occupants were subsequently detained for two hours while officials established whether it was an accident or a rather brazen jail-break. "Prisoners were in the barracks at the time, but the landing caused a security alarm, sending jail officials into a tizzy," the report says.

Local authorities have reacted to the mishap by removing the balloon company's licence and cancelling balloon rides over the area, while it investigates the "unlawful entry" at the prison. NDTV says the tourists decided on a less high-risk activity the following day, opting for an elephant ride.

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Fernhurst is situated about 16 miles north of Chichester on the A286. Friday's Hill House at Fernhurst, once a regular meeting place of the Fabian Society when it included George Bernard Shaw and the Webbs, has a ghost story attached to it, concerning a parlour maid seen by the family living there in the 1900s. Guests at a dinner party in 1904 saw and commented separately on this household servant from the spirit world, but I have not heard of any explanation to account for this particular apparition.

One would expect Fernhurst to be peopled by ghosts from the days of the Sussex ironworks, as the history of the village is closely linked to this industry. Alice M. Tudor who wrote a comprehensive and factual history - Fernhurst: the story of a Sussex village (1969) said in her introduction: 'Fernhurst was never a Black Country, but for two hundred years the noise of the hammers of the ironworks disturbed its peace and the felling of the woodlands robbed it of much of its beauty.' Although all that is very much in the past, many of the names linking the area with the old iron foundries remain. For example Furnace Pond, Furnace Wood, Ironhill Common, and Minepit Copse.

The old spelling of the name was Farnhurst (and variants) but in modern times it has firmly settled for Fernhurst. One peculiarity of the parish is that it originally included a strip of Hampshire, North Ambersham, within its boundaries. It has been conjectured that this might go back to the days when the men of Wessex invaded Sussex, and occupied this portion. Having failed to hold on to their conquered territory, they withdrew leaving behind families of settlers who continued to look upon themselves as Wessex folk. In 1913 the Ambershams were incorporated into the neighbouring parishes, and this little bit of Hampshire in Sussex was forced to change its allegiance.

No one can accuse the Fernhurst men of lack of versatility or resourcefulness. In 1903 a directory listed George Mills as Firewood Dealer and Income Tax Collector. A story from the 19th century tells of how a Fernhurst man got married and addressed the parson in this way: 'I ain't got no money, y'know; y'must take it out in taties.' I hope present day Fernhurst men haven't changed too much.

NB

The village information above is taken from *The West Sussex Village Book*, written by Tony Wales and published by Countryside Books. Click on the link Countryside Books to view Countryside's range of other local titles.

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Trolley crash near Cedar Grove Station; 4 complain of back discomfort - The Boston Globe

By Martin Finucane Globe Staff November 26, 2014

bostonglobe.com

David L. Ryan/Globe Staff An out-of-service trolley hit another trolley containing commuters Wednesday morning near Cedar Grove Station.

Several people sustained minor injuries when an out-of-service trolley hit another trolley containing commuters Wednesday morning near Cedar Grove Station, authorities said.

The MBTA said seven people complained of back discomfort after the crash on the Ashmont-Mattapan high-speed trolley line at about 6:40 a.m. Full service resumed shortly before 9 a.m. on the line.

The Boston Fire Department said they were called to the scene at 6:43 a.m. Approximately five people were placed on backboards and evacuated, while another couple were evacuated using chairs, the department said in official tweets.

Rescuers got access to the scene through Cedar Grove Cemetery. The operation included Boston EMS, MBTA Transit Police, and the MBTA, fire officials said. The fire department had left the scene by 7:45 a.m.

Both cars were inbound trolleys. The out-of-service trolley rolled backward toward a trolley behind it and made contact with it, the MBTA said. At the time, the weather was clear.

“Investigators will be interviewing the trolley operator and inspecting equipment as they gather all the facts in this matter,” MBTA spokesman Joe Pesaturo said in a statement.

The passengers were escorted off the trolley and taken to a bus to continue their journeys.

Shuttle buses also replaced Red Line service between Harvard and Alewife stations in both directions earlier in the morning, according to the MBTA’s website. The MBTA blamed disabled work equipment for the service disruption, and says commuters may experience minor residual delays.

Below are media reports on the crash:

> From scene of Trolley collision; inside Cedar Grove Cemetery
> pic.twitter.com/jdHCBsFP7O
>
> — Bill Forry (@DotNews) November 26, 2014

#BREAKING: 4 injured after 2-trolley collision. http://t.co/97sUgGB8Fk pic.twitter.com/sMZ3Z21xOv

— NECN (@NECN) November 26, 2014

#BreakingNews: Firefighters cutting fence to get to trolley, after collision in Dorchester #WCVB pic.twitter.com/XJyS05PuxX

— antoinette antonio (@antoinetteA) November 26, 2014

Few dozen passengers walking down tracks to waiting bus, after trolley collision in Dorchester #WCVB pic.twitter.com/ggCNd2htLf

— antoinette antonio (@antoinetteA) November 26, 2014

- CCBaxter11/26/14 07:48 AM

I took that trolley to Cedar Grove as part of my daily commute for years and it was quite safe. I'm guessing that the operator of the out of service trolley must have been impaired in some way-either that or the brakes failed.

- ecce homo11/26/14 08:17 AM

Those Orange Line cars look like they're from the 50s! Another "dark spot" on the T's record of accidents and inconveniences! The T continues to head "south"!

    - CCBaxter11/26/14 09:01 AM

    They are out of the 1950's and they have a certain charm. It is a safe ride but the tracks from Ashmont to Cedar Grove go downward so it is up to the operator to put on the brakes. It must have been a hell of an impact.

    - twenty1twelve11/26/14 10:02 AM

    Not the Orange Line. And the trolleys have been completely rebuilt over the last decade.

    http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ashmont%E2%80%93Mattapan_High_Speed_Line

- embalmer2011/26/14 10:25 AM

Must have been on the last bite of that Egg NcMuffin

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Urine protest against drug test idea

9 December 2014 bbc.com

Last updated at 09:45 ET

Young Democrats members holding urine samples outside the council building

The Young Democrats members deposited urine samples at the local council offices

A proposal to make young people in Hungary take annual drug tests has gone down badly with one youth party, which delivered urine samples to the local council in protest.

District mayor Mate Kocsis, from the ruling Fidesz party, wants all 12 to 18-year-olds to be tested for drugs, as well as politicians and journalists, the Hungary Today website reports. But the Young Democrats don't think much of the idea, so several members filled little jars with urine and took them to Budapest's 8th district council offices, where Mr Kocsis works. The group is the youth wing of the opposition Democratic Coalition party. Outside the council building, Young Democrats leader Bendeguz Koppany Szarvas told the press that the mayor should have "nothing to do with our private lives whatsoever", and accused him of seeing all young people as drug addicts.

The Fidesz parliamentary group has announced it will support the drug test proposal with some "refinements", including ensuring that parents are informed of their children's drug test results. There would also be no legal consequences for any minors who test positive, according to Fidesz MP Antal Rogan. The Democratic Coalition says the proposal would cost 40 billion forints ($162m; £103m), 400 times more than the amount allocated to drug prevention in next year's budget.

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US couple marry at son's funeral

2009/09/08 14:58:34 bbc.co.uk

Asa's parents said he had always wanted them to marry

Asa Hill

A couple from the US state of New York have been married during the funeral of their seven-year-old son, saying he had always wanted them to wed.

Amilcar Hill and Rahwa Ghirmatizion said marrying at the Buffalo service was a "fitting" tribute to Asa.

Mourners at the service for the boy, who died in a car crash, were not aware the wedding was going to take place.

The couple said they had also found peace in knowing Asa's organs had been donated to save other children's lives.

"Asa always wanted us to get married," Mrs Ghirmatizion told the Buffalo News after the ceremony.

"He'd say, "When are you guys going to get married? How come you're not getting married?' And we'd say, 'We were waiting for you to be part of it.'

"That's why it's so fitting."

The "perfect child" Asa with his grandmother and father Amilcar

Asa Hill as a baby with his father Amilcar Hill (C) and grandmother, Lorna Hill

Asa was fatally injured when his grandfather's car, in which he was travelling, was involved in a six-car accident in New York state last week.

Tributes at the funeral, which was attended by hundreds of people, described the boy as "a force of nature".

His grandmother, Lorna Hill, said Asa had been a "perfect child" and thanked what she said was the "perfect community" for their influence.

Mr Hill told mourners they should be inspired the way Asa had lived his life.

The married couple also urged others to consider becoming organ donors.

Mr Hill said doing so had been "a hard decision" but that "it has brought me peace".

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US used Nazis as Cold War spies

27 October 2014 bbc.com

J Edgar Hoover (left) and Attorney General J Howard McGrath appeared in Washington on 20 June 1951

Declassified US records reveal the nation's intelligence chiefs used hundreds of Nazis as spies and informants after World War Two.

Central Intelligence Agency officials are said to have turned to the country's former enemies to help beat the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

Academics studying the documents say America used at least 1,000 ex-Nazis.

Some had served at the highest levels of the Nazi Party, and were recruited to work as spies for the US in Europe.

Former SS officer Otto von Bolschwing reportedly wrote policy papers on how to terrorise Jews, but was hired by the CIA to spy in Europe after World War Two.

The agency is said to have relocated him and his family to New York in the 1950s as a reward for loyal service.

Nazi collaborator Aleksandras Lileikis - linked to the massacres of tens of thousands of Jews in Lithuania - was recruited by the US as a spy in East Germany and later brought over to Boston.

There is evidence the CIA even tried to intervene when Mr Lileikis became the subject of a war crimes investigation.

The recruitment of Nazi assets occurred against the backdrop of Cold War paranoia and panic.

But records indicate long-time FBI director J Edgar Hoover not only approved of the use of ex-Nazis as spies, he also dismissed the horrific acts they had been involved in during the war as Soviet propaganda.

The revelations come one week after an Associated Press investigation found the US government had paid dozens of suspected Nazi war criminals millions of dollars in Social Security benefits after forcing them to leave the US.

The payments were made through a legal loophole. The US justice department later said benefits are paid to individuals who renounce US citizenship and leave voluntarily.

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360NewsOctober 27, 2014posted by Datboyjerry

According to latest report, a 38-year-old man is accused of allegedly biting and killing his infant son, and blaming it on the neighbor's pet dog.

**

Emery James Jenkins, who hails from Deer River, Minnesota, is charged with one felony count of second-degree murder in the death of his 3-month-old son.

The baby reportedly died after two days in the hospital. The medical examiner found a skull fracture, blunt force trauma to the body, and biting injuries to the infant's chest, hands, fingers, feet, and toes.

Jenkins reportedly told police he dropped the baby on his head in a bathtub and that the neighbor's dog bit the baby boy while he was in a car seat. Jenkins believed the dog bit the baby because the child was wearing a monkey suit.

**

The baby boy's mother said she and Jenkins made up the story about the dog before calling 911, according to the criminal complaint.

She said Jenkins bit their son because he was crying. The father then didn't want to take him to the doctor because of the bleeding bite wounds severe enough to soak through the baby's clothing.

When police investigated Jenkins' home, authorities found baby clothes and pillow cases with dried blood stains.

When Jenkins' previous girlfriends were interviewed, they said that Jenkins has a history of violence and drug abuse, including the use of methamphetamine. One girlfriend told police

that Jenkins had slammed a different son's head into a car door and made verbal threats about hurting the children.

Jenkins has received numerous assault charges. His criminal history includes a felony assault charge in 2010. The man now faced up to 40 years in prison for the murder of the child.

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Vampire novel offends

Statesman Journal statesmanjournal.com

The involvement of Paul Evans, a retired Air Force officer, in the group writing of an erotic vampire novel while on duty with the military is an insult to all the current and past military officers who have served this country honorably.

Military officers are held to an extremely high standard of conduct, which is defined and enforced by the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Violations result in reprimand, loss of rank or being passed over for promotion. Utilizing military resources to write a 516-page erotic novel that glorifies orgies, rape, torture and murder of women is clearly not an objective of the U.S. military and a reflection of a lack of good judgment and moral character on Paul Evans' part.

Enemy attacks are not something new, and through the years, the military has devised many ways to keep the minds of troops occupied between such attacks – none of which involve the writing of an erotic novel.

Oregon Family Council made the right call on Paul Evans. I would not want my son or daughter serving under his leadership in the military and do not want him representing my family as an elected official in any governmental body.

William Frohnmayer

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Vampire slaying kit from 1800s goes up for sale in New Jersey

13:12 EST, 18 October 2014 |
13:12 EST, 18 October 2014
dailymail.co.uk

A vampire slaying kit complete with guns, axes, wooden stakes and crucifixes is among hundreds of creepy items up for sale in a New Jersey auction.

The 19th century kit, which has been constructed inside a wooden coffin, has been given a starting bid of $5,000 at the 'Danse Macabre' (dance of death) sale in Closter later this month.

In addition to the old-fashioned weaponry, it includes a religious book, vials of holy water, garlic and salt, and other items needed to slaughter a blood-sucking monster.

Scroll down for video

For sale: This vampire slaying kit is among hundreds of creepy items up for sale in a New Jersey auction

Weaponry: The 19th century kit is complete with old guns, axes (pictured) wooden stakes and crucifixes

To deter a vampire: It also includes a religious book and small jars of holy water, garlic and salt (pictured)

Chilling: The kit, which also contains intricately carved wooden stakes (left), has been given a starting bid of $5,000 at an auction in Closter, New Jersey. Right, another item in the sale, a Japanese demon mask

A creepy buy: The kit's exterior (pictured) resembles a wooden coffin - and its interior is just as creepy

Although particularly striking to look at, the kit is not the only one available for potential vampire slayers to buy. Another smaller kit, featuring silver crucifixes and wooden stakes, is also on sale.

Meanwhile, a voodoo box from the 1800s - complete with 'hexing paraphernalia', a human skull, a wax doll and chilling photos of infants from post-mortem records - will appear at the auction.

The box, along with many of the auction's other items, was collected by Mark Falk, 'a mild-mannered U.S. government employee' who had a secret obsession with the occult and macabre.

After his death, Falk's home was found brimming with objects related to 'death, post mortems, voodoo, vampires, medical quackery, gruesome tribal knives'.

Smaller kit: Although particularly striking to look at, the kit is not the only one available for potential vampire slayers to buy. Another smaller kit (pictured) with silver crucifixes and wooden stakes is also on sale

Bony: Many of the 'Danse Macabre' (dance of death) sale's items were

collected by government worker Mark Falk, who had a secret obsession with the occult and macabre. Above, a vintage articulated human hand

Skull: After his death, Falk's home was found brimming with objects related to 'death, post mortems, voodoo, vampires, medical quackery, gruesome tribal knives'. Above, a portion of skull; starting bid $50

Superstitious: A voodoo box (pictured) from the 1800s - complete with 'hexing paraphernalia',

a human skull, a wax doll and chilling photos of infants from post-mortem records - will also appear at the auction

A tragic fate: The box contains a number photos of infants from post-mortem records, including this one

Antique: A selection of four African throwing knives featuring engraved blades and wrapped handles

'By day, Mark Falk was a government worker who went to church regularly and played music as a hobby,' said auction house owner, Stephen D'Atr, of Sterling Associates in New Jersey.

'All of his friends say he was a wonderful, interesting guy. What made him different was that he also had a fascination with death.'

Other items up for sale include taxidermy insects (such as tarantulas), historic music sheets from famous composers, a Japanese demon mask, African throwing knives and human

bones.

Regal: Another item up for sale is this regimental silver-mounted Gurkha kukri with Royal Cypher of Queen Elizabeth II. Its rear pouch contains two horn-handle knives.

Music: This collection of six antique music journals with music from various composers is also up for sale

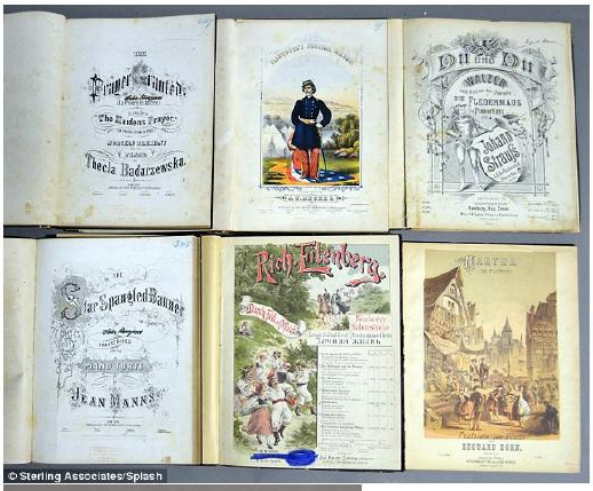
Old-fashioned: This bound album of handwritten sheet music (right), possibly by Mozart, dating back to 19th century and Vogel V 180 Royal (by Schimmel) baby grand piano (left) will also feature in the auction

Strange collection: Other items up for sale include a collection of framed insects, with a starting bid of $100

Upcoming sale; The auction will be held using remote bids on October 22. Above, a green insect in a frame

'There is a human foot, a hand, a female pelvis and a partial skull, it really creeps you out,' said Mr D'Atr.

There is also a regimental silver-mounted Gurkha kukri featuring the Royal Cypher of Queen Elizabeth II. Its rear pouch contains two horn-handle knives.



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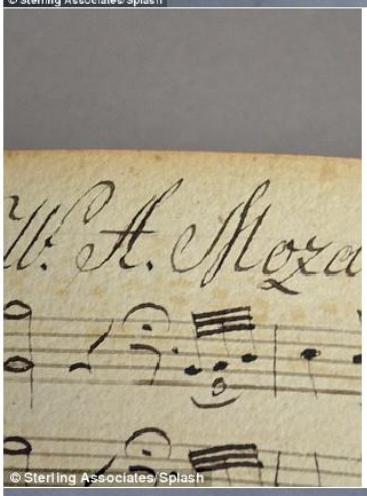
The auction will be held using remote bids on October 22.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PublishedWednesday, October 15, A.D. 2014 | ByFoxfier

> Through mere glimpses of him, however, demonic accuracy is achieved: Dracula is an Antichrist. He cannot attack unless willingly engaged. He baptizes his victims in his blood even as he drinks theirs in a sacrifice that gives eternal "life" in animated death. He unites captive souls to his existence, thriving on the unhallowed. He twists scripture to his purpose, lusts for worship … and fears Christ. *Crisis Magazine, Oct 2013*

Over at Father Z's blog, he made a (joking) post about how sad he was that he didn't get a vampire hunting kit for Christmas. One comment pointed out that we can't sell blessed objects. (Technically false; blessed objects can be sold for their intrinsic value, without added price for the blessing, but accurate enough in terms of buying a *Vampire hunting kit* which would be pretty worthless without blessing.) This got me thinking about the various legends related to vampires, and Catholicism, especially how often they are portrayed wrongly.

The most famous example of bad (horrifying, really) Catholic theology that involves vampires and popular culture is probably the Dracula story. At one point, Van Helsing makes a putty out of consecrated Hosts, and uses it to vampire-proof a room. It's supposed to be alright, because he has a dispensation. (No, they don't work that way.)

Needless to say, this isn't respectful of the Body of Christ, and if the vampire is reacting to the Body of Christ then it isn't effective, either.

> With respect to the presence of Christ, most theologians hold that, although the host externally remains intact for several days, the real presence ceases as soon as the host is fully soaked with water as from that moment the species is no longer exclusively that of bread.

That aside, Dracula is rather well researched in regards to the folklore of vampires. For example, the crucifix has power in and of itself, since it has a representation of Christ on it, while crosses depend more on the person holding the cross invoking God directly. In various times and places, the formally-blessed cross (or other objects, such as holy medals) was thought to be enough to invoke God. Those objects are called sacramentals, things that recall the sacraments. (*Dracula*'s mistaken abuse of the Host is indicative of someone who didn't recognize Transubstantiation, but viewed it as a sort of super-strong symbol.) The most obvious sacramental, which is also used in popular pieties and commonly available for the asking, is holy water– many parishes even have dispensers. It should be kept in mind that the people who really believed in vampires weren't trying to use holy water or any other sacramental for some kind of a magical effect, but to invoke God's protection from forces of evil.

Some of the things vampires fear are symbolic, instead of sacramental. Running water calls to mind baptism and the washing away of sins, silver is "white" metal and thus pure, garlic

and various plants were believed to be medicines against corruption. Even salt, because of its powers of preservation, was thought in some places to ward off evil, including vampires.

Vampires lack of reflection probably grew out of the folklore of the soulless not having a shadow, and the way that mirrors were once backed with silver. Some more folklore savvy stories had digital cameras work to record vampires, but not silver-based movie cameras, and at least one used silver nitrate in the blood to kill a vampire.

Speaking of souls, this is probably the biggest problem with vampire stories: all too often, authors write "vampires" that by all evidence possess rational souls. To shamelessly steal–er, borrow– from Jimmy Akin's highly enjoyable Theology of the Living Dead, there are four basic options for any flavor of living dead:

1. **Animal soul** – this is the most traditional, but has more in common with modern zombies as far as behavior goes; modern vampires are generally more intelligent than the average human.
2. **Non-human rational soul** – *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*'s vampires– they are evil, but the "demons" animating vampires aren't Satanic, and a lot of the "demons" are just multidimensional travelers. The theology of that television show makes my head hurt….
3. **Human souls** – the 'vampire' subculture would be an example of this, or if a story had vampirism as a sort of disease.
4. **No soul** – the body is remote-controlled, either by technology (nanobot vampires) or perhaps demonic possession. (As I understand it, demons are spirits, rather than souls, and couldn't inhabit a body the way a human soul would. I'd highly advise a lot of mythology research before anybody tried to write this!)

Most vampire stories these days are either humans with a disease or non-human souls animating a body; some of them aren't even "allergic" to blessed objects. Obviously, if they have rational souls, we have to treat them as people rather than monsters, but then it doesn't make any sense why holy objects would harm them.

On a practical level, I'd say that anything that smokes on contact with a holy object is to be avoided.

For Halloween, I'm cross-posting slightly edited versions of my C&C monster series from Catholic Stand, one a week. Hope that you folks enjoy them.

12 Responses to Vampires

- Donald R. McClarey on Thursday, October 16, A.D. 2014 at 5:49am

"On a practical level, I'd say that anything that smokes on contact with a holy object is to be avoided."

Brilliant Foxfier! That goes in my little black book of quotations that I ~~steal~~ borrow!

- WK Aiken on Thursday, October 16, A.D. 2014 at 8:01am

I've always considered the traditional vampire legend to be a metaphor for the carnal (corrupt) as opposed to the spiritual (perfect) and as such was used initially as an anecdotal teaching tool. When instruction in metaphysics and theology were more familiar, a good instrument to initiate the young or help inform the less-erudite would be "what to not be and how to avoid it" as illustrative models.
.
In that vein (pun intended) it is easy to see how the vampire pathos has been made more approachable as the carnal has become elevated to equality with the spiritual in popular culture. Religious teaching is virtually non-existent in the main, so how can the denouement of carnal deterrent by application of the sacred make any sense?

- Stephen E. Dalton on Thursday, October 16, A.D. 2014 at 9:34am

If one wants a fun read on vampires, the Rev. Montague Summers is the man. This somewhat controversial priest actually believed in the existence of vampires and other revenants. However, his books on the subject are chock full of stories of the living dead from ancient times to now. So, if you want to read books with a lot of folklore about these critters, you can't go wrong with Monty.

- T. Shaw on Thursday, October 16, A.D. 2014 at 11:49am

I think zombies are the "larger" post-modern bogey-man. The proliferation of zombie-themed movies and TV series is proof.

When the zombie apocalypse (trope for societal collapse?) falls, I'll be head-shooting Z's and gut-shooting liberalss.

Need to increase my supplies of ammunition.

- Foxfier on Thursday, October 16, A.D. 2014 at 12:25pm

I was kinda proud of it, Donald.

:D
....

WK- there's so many possible metaphors, and it mines so many things we fear, that it's hard to pick "the" thing that it's about.
There's a writer named Mary C that points out modern vampires fill the role of the "fairy lover" in classic stories, and the modern zombie is more like the classic vampires.

- Paul Zummo on Thursday, October 16, A.D. 2014 at 12:39pm

At the risk of coming off as completely self-serving and stealing Foxfier's thunder, here is a link to a short story that I wrote and published on Amazon about Dracula and friends. It's available on Kindle for the low low price of 99 cents, and is more of a spoof of modern vampire literature. I have what might be considered a unique interpretation of why Vampires fear crucifixes, and of their entire back-story for that matter.

http://www.amazon.com/Dracula-Friends-Paul-Zummo-ebook/dp/B00G4ST8G4/ref=sr_1_3?ie=UTF8&qid=1413480766&sr=8-3&keywords=paul+zummo

- Mary De Voe on Thursday, October 16, A.D. 2014 at 1:52pm

Vampires, werewolves, zombies and ghouls are devoid of self-sacrifice.This is why remembrances of self-sacrifice disturb them. Once they were human beings. Now, they are trapped in a dimension of the living dead, which they chose for themselves, thinking it better than to be a Christian. They must be ex-patriots from hell operating on the forbearance of God, which is to warn sinners to behave. They may be the rich man allowed to return to earth to warn his brothers of the hell awaiting them.

.

Remember too, it was not the state, nor the mad scientist who gave Frankenstein life. It was the lightening of God.

.

Let me be the first to wish you all a HAPPY HALLOWEEN, a HOLY ALL SAINTS' DAY and a memorable ALL SOULS DAY, Nov. 2nd.

- WK Aiken on Thursday, October 16, A.D. 2014 at 1:56pm

Paul Zummo, thanks for the momentary distraction. Very amusing. How much of my 99 cents do you keep?

- Mary De Voe on Thursday, October 16, A.D. 2014 at 2:48pm

T Shaw: got to get silver bullets. The economy is bad. Tell the vampires to go to hell and keep the silver for yourself.

- T. Shaw on Thursday, October 16, A.D. 2014 at 3:28pm

Mary Dear,

Not sure the melting temperature of silver. It's likely much higher than lead. That makes loading my own more difficult.

I'm piling up Scotch whisky. Might as well go out on a spree.

- Foxfier on Thursday, October 16, A.D. 2014 at 3:40pm

962*, T. Shaw.
Paul Z- that is AWESOME! I'm all about supporting self-pub.

- T. Shaw on Thursday, October 16, A.D. 2014 at 4:03pm

The Lone Ranger also used silver bullets.

.

According to wikipedia, “The masked man decided to use bullets forged from the precious metal as a symbol of justice, law and order, and to remind himself and others that life, like silver, has value and is not to be wasted or thrown away.”

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Verdley Woods Fernhurst - Most Haunted

by Paul Griffiths · June 9, 2010

Verdley Woods Fernhurst

Fernhurst is a large village on the A286, Haslemere to Midhurst road, in West Sussex, but close to the Surrey border, and includes the settlements of Bell Vale, Kingsley Green and Henley Common.

Although an active village with a modern outlook, Fernhurst is steeped in history, beginning life as a small scattered settlement in Saxon times.
Once called Farnhurst, the name is derived from the Anglo Saxon – “fern covered hill”. The village is surrounded by hills, including, to the northeast, Blackdown, at 919ft, the highest hill in Sussex.

Verdley Woods

The legendary ghost of the last bear to be killed in England is said to haunt Verdley Woods just south of Fernhurst. An Australian television crew went in search of the spectral animal but were unable to find it.

Just to the south of the estate, in ‘Fordly Coppice’, is the site of Verdley Castle, dating from the 13th century.

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Vessel Buried 20 Feet Under New Jersey Beach Could Be Historical Find

By JOHN FISCHER November 3, 2014 2:42 PM

yahoo.com

Vessel Buried 20 Feet Under New Jersey Beach Could Be Historical Find

Vessel Buried 20 Feet Under New Jersey Beach Could Be Historical Find (ABC News)

Historians and town officials are eager to excavate the remnants of a vessel more than 100 years old that was discovered on a New Jersey beach by drillers preparing a protective sea wall in the wake of superstorm Sandy.

The discovery could be nothing more than an old barge, but some officials believe it is a much more historical sailing ship from as far back as the 1850s, and at least one has a hunch that it is the skeleton of the Ayrshire, a Scottish brig that crashed on to a New Jersey sandbar in 1850.

John Ducey, the mayor of Brick, suspected construction workers would find something while digging through the beach. Lumber, certainly, possibly even an old car, he said.

"I was shocked," he told ABC News. "I thought it was kind of cool that a ship from the 1850s was 20 feet under the sand."

EIC Associates, contractors hired by the state, had spent the last four months building a steel wall along the New Jersey coastline to protect against hurricanes and severe storms when one of its rigs, a drill-like machine, burrowed into the sand and broke upon hitting something last Tuesday.

The crew dug through the sand, coming across the thick timbers of the vessel. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection is not sure what they've found, saying it could be a ship or a barge. It did confirm though that the boat was designed before the 1900s due to its peg-like construction, a style of ship making that predates the early 20th century.

"A ship has much more historical value than a barge," said Bob Constantine, a spokesperson for the DEP. "It could very well be a ship, but we don't know yet."

EIC Associates declined to comment.

The remnants consisted of timber and debris along with an intact windlass, a device used to release the anchor and lines of a vessel, according to Daniel Lied, an expert at the New Jersey Shipwreck Museum in the InfoAge Science Center. He says that because the windlass was found on top of where the deck was, there may be more ship underneath it.

"It leads me to assume there's a lot more vessel down there," he said.

View photo

Courtesy Brick Township

Courtesy Brick Township

Shipwrecks were a common occurrence along the New Jersey coast between the early 1800s and early 1900s, happening "once a week on average," according to Lied who called the period the "heyday" of shipwrecks.

Lied said that if the remains are from a ship, they could potentially match those from one of 12 wrecks. One of these wrecks is the Ayrshire, a Scottish brig that went down after hitting a sandbar on Jan. 12, 1850. The sandbar that it struck is today part of Manasquan, a new Jersey area next to Brick.

The sinking was historical because it marked the first time the Francis life-car, a metal life raft with a roof was used, according to Lied. The life-car which saved 199 of the 201 British and Irish immigrants on the Ayrshire, was acquired by the National Museum of Natural History in 1890.

"The first time it was ever used, and it was used quite successfully," he said. "If this wreckage is indeed the remains of Ayrshire, that makes this wreckage highly historical, one of the most historical ship wrecks in the U.S."

New Jersey hired EIC Associates in July with a $23.8 million contract to design and build a 3.5 mile-long steel wall to protect vulnerable areas from hurricanes and severe storms. The project was an effort to protect areas that were severely damaged by Hurricane Sandy in 2012.

Constantine said work on the wall is proceding in other areas and that that the area where the buried vessel was found is small and would not have a huge impact on the length of the project. If the vessel is indeed a ship, it will be recorded in the New Jersey register of historical places.

"Once we have a marine archaeologist look at it, we're going to probe into the ground, get a sense of how big the area is, and then we'll go from there," said Constantine.

A marine archaeologist has been hired to examine the remains over the next few days.

"Something like preserving a ship is important," said Ducey. "So if it delays the project a bit, I have no problem with that."

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CCTV footage shows apparent hypnotist robbery

Shopkeeper Aftab "Aziz" Haider told police he was "momentarily unaware" while the thief picked his pockets.

By Ben Hooper | Dec. 5, 2014 at 9:23 AM

LONDON, Dec. 5 (UPI) -- London police released CCTV footage of a convenience store theft in which the suspect apparently hypnotized the shopkeeper before picking his pockets.

The Metropolitan Police said the suspect entered the Hops 'N' Pops store and requested water for his pregnant wife, which he indicated by touching the stomach area of owner Aftab "Aziz" Haider, 56, apparently putting him into a hypnotic trance. The suspect then took the shopkeeper's wallet and hundreds of dollars worth of cash from his pockets.

The footage from the Sept. 11 incident shows Haider appear to snap out of the trance as the suspect was leaving the store, but he started shouting too late to stop the man.

Police said members of the public are being encouraged to come forward if they recognize the suspect, who was described as between 30 and 35 years old.

"The victim in this incident said that he was momentarily unaware of what had happened to him," Detective Sgt. Dave Bullock said in a news release. "The suspect's distraction tactics appeared to have worked as he robbed the victim of cash from his pocket. If anyone recognizes the suspect or has been a victim in similar circumstances, please contact us."

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Viral video: Lifetime ban after train vomit

December 10, 2014 news.com.au

Beenleigh man banned from Queensland trains for life after gross projectile vomit video

- by: Paige Carfrae
- From: The Courier-Mail
- 1 day ago 10:29AM

'No regrets': Adrian Van Oyen. *Source:* CourierMail

A QUEENSLAND prankster has been banned from Queensland Rail for life after conducting a repulsive prank on a train.

Self-proclaimed comedian Adrian Van Oyen, from Beenleigh, posted a video to Facebook of himself intentionally vomiting green milk on a Queensland train.

A nearly empty two litre bottle of green milk can be seen sitting on the train seat to the right of the video.

"I tried telling them I had Ebola :/ But nope, still got a lifetime ban from Queensland Rail," Van Oyen captioned the video.

Man's gross prank

Van Oyen was slammed by Facebookers, with most commenters saying his prank was not funny, and neither was the joke about Ebola.

"Wow ... Let's put this into perspective ... 100 years ago we had men younger than you fighting for this country. Australians that died for this country, so you could do exactly what??? You are not worth it," one commenter wrote.

"You're a disgusting grub. Decent folk use those trains for decent reasons and you're there doing that sh*t. Maybe good for a laugh but have some common decency for other people," another said.

However, some of Van Oyen's fans sympathised.

"Don't hate so much. Imagine what he is feeling like now, getting this many abusive

comments in one night. Give him a break. He's just trying to cheer up the world a bit," a Facebooker commented.

It's not the first time the 20-year-old has been in trouble with Queensland Rail, after pleading guilty in Brisbane Magistrate's Court in 2012 for impersonating a ticket officer and being a public nuisance on the train while recording his Awkward Train Situations video.

The clip has already been viewed more than 500,000 times on Facebook since it was uploaded to Van Oyen's page on Monday night.

Just last week Van Oyen posted a video of himself terrorising major retail stores by pulling items from shelves and tripping over items which resulted in a year long ban on from entering the stores.

"I released a video last week, which got me banned from all Coles, Woolworths, Big W and BI-LO for a whole year after the video went viral," he told Daily Mail Australia.

"I was taken to court by Coles and then Woolies came along and took me to court after it created a lot of controversy."

Despite his bans, Van Oyen said he had "no regrets filming it — it was worth it!"

Originally published as Lifetime ban for gross rail prank

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Few accounts of forgery are as strange as the case of Vrain Lucas.

Lucas's career as a forger began in 1851 when he met the esteemed French mathematician Michel Chasles. Lucas showed the mathematician a few letters he claimed to have found written by famous historical personages such as Joan of Arc and Charlemagne. Chasles was intrigued, so Lucas began "finding" more letters for him.

The letters that Lucas presented to Chasles were written by a broad spectrum of historical celebrities including Julius Caesar, Aristotle, Alexander the Great, Lazarus, Mary Magdalene, and Shakespeare, but they all shared a few things in common. Their content always reflected favorably on France, and they were all written in French. Most of them were even written on the same watermarked paper (even the ones supposedly from the early Roman empire).

For some reason, none of this ever caused Chasles pause. He kept buying whatever Lucas produced, and Lucas eventually produced thousands of these letters.

Suspicion was only raised when a scholar noticed that sixteen of Lucas's letters letters had been copied from a 1761 manuscript. But even then, Chasles defended Lucas. It was only when Lucas failed to deliver 3,000 autographs, which Chasles had paid in advance for, that Chasles finally brought charges against him. This was in 1869, eighteen years after the two men had first met.

In February, 1870 Lucas was sentenced to two years in jail. As he was taken away to prison, it was discovered that he had been preparing a special manuscript for Chasles before he had been interrupted by the trial. It was the text of the Sermon on the Mount written by Jesus himself in French.

- Henri Leonard Bordier, *The Prince of Forgers*, Oak Knoll Press. 1998.

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Singer (1937–)

Wanda Jackson - Mini Bio

Synopsis

Born in Oklahoma in 1937, singer Wanda Jackson began performing while still in high school and had signed with Capitol Records by the time she was 20. Her hit songs, including 1959's "Let's Have a Party," climbed both the country and rock charts, earning her the "Queen of Rockabilly" title. She was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2005.

Early Life

Singer. Wanda Lavonne Jackson was born on October 20, 1937, in Maud, Oklahoma, a small town on the outskirts of Oklahoma City, and lived there until her family moved to Bakersfield, California, to escape the poverty created by the Dust Bowl during the Great Depression. Her father was a musician who noticed that the young Jackson showed an interest in music, so he bought her a guitar when she was six years old. She also attended country music concerts with her father and sang in her church's gospel choir. When she was 12 the family relocated back to Oklahoma, and later as a high school student Jackson won a talent show. The prize was her own radio program.

It was through this radio exposure that Jackson was discovered by country star Hank Thompson, who invited her to sing with his band, the Brazos Valley Boys. She began performing with them on weekends. In 1954, she recorded the single "You Can't Have My Love," with one of the men from the band, andthe song hit No. 8 on the country charts. Thompson tried to get her signed with Capitol Records, but Ken Nelson, a Capitol producer, said "Girls don't sell records," so Jackson signed with Decca instead, recording a large batch of songs for the label before graduating high school.

In 1955, soon after graduation, Jackson joined the Ozark Jubilee tour that featured many up-and-coming acts, including Elvis Presley. The two briefly dated and Presley told her to try singing rockabilly, an early version of rock and roll whose name comes from a blend of "rock" and "hillbilly." The sound was shaped by rhythm and blues, country, and swing. "In 1956, at Elvis's insistence, I started singing rock 'n' roll songs. He had made me promise that I would try to sing some rockabilly, so I did. There were four or five years that I recorded rockabilly music… Once I sang it, I realized I love rock 'n' roll, and I can sing it. Elvis was right."

Rock and Roll Hits

A year later, Jackson finally signed with Capitol and recorded "I Gotta Know," which proved that she really could sing rock and roll like the best of the boys. The song reached No. 15 on the charts and her popularity began to take off. Of course, Presley's own popularity took off too. Jackson says about her friend: "I was excited for him. And, of course, I was 17 and 18 years old, so I was a fan of his, as well as a friend. And I was thrilled to death at his success."

Unlike most other female acts of the time, Jackson wore short skirts, hoop earrings, and high heels—all outfits her mother designed. The female equivalent of Presley's leather suits and pelvic thrusting, she was the first woman to bring sex appeal to the rock and roll stage. Of her outfits, she told NPR, "I've never been able to wear a full skirt; haven't to this day. And the cowboy hats and those little clubby boots. And I just didn't like it. I didn't feel like that was me, because I was a big fan of Marilyn Monroe and Elizabeth Taylor, and I wanted to look like them." She was so sexy, in fact, that she was not even allowed onstage at the Grand Ole Opry until she covered her shoulders.

For the next six years, through the late 1950s and into the early 1960s, Jackson put out both rock and country singles, refusing to work in just one genre and finding considerable success. She insisted on using only the highest-quality session musicians; their polished sound, combined with her gravelly and wild voice, produced some of the best rock of her time.

The songs that Wanda Jackson recorded and performed during this period—such as "Hot Dog! That Made Him Mad," "Mean, Mean Man," and "Fujiyama Mama"—pushed the envelope in other ways as well. Her lyrics were ahead of their time, featuring sexually suggestive innuendo and depictions of strong women who did not put up with controlling men. More than anything, her songs conveyed pure, unadulterated good times. "Fujiyama Mama," a huge hit in both the United States and namesake Japan, contains the lyrics: "Well you can talk about me, say that I'm mean/ I'll blow your head off, baby, with nitroglycerine!"

Her most famous song was 1959's "Let's Have a Party," which combined her wild energy, sex appeal, and rebellious spirit. Presley had sung the tune a year earlier in a film, and Capitol considered it a filler track for Jackson's first album, but she made the song all her own. Jackson rocked out harder than the King himself, and "Let's Have a Party" remains her biggest hit to this day.

Country Hits

By the turn of the 1960s, Jackson was headlining her own tours backed by a band she named The Party Timers and releasing country hits that climbed the charts as well. Hoping to profit from her popularity in the early 1960s, Capitol released compilation albums of her earlier hits from the 1950s such as *Rockin' With Wanda and There's a Party Goin' On*. However, her rock albums did not bring in as much money as her country records, so she released *Right or Wrong*, *Love Me Forever*, and *Wonderful Wanda*, three country albums that sold by the millions.

In 1961, Wanda Jackson married IBM computer programmer Wendell Goodman, and they had two children and raised their family in Oklahoma City.

In 1963, Jackson's album *Two Sides of Wanda*, which included songs like "Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On," "Honey Don't," "Rip It Up," and "Searchin,'" combined rockabilly and country sounds to win a Grammy for Best Female Country Vocal Performance.

Unfortunately, her image as a sexually liberated and independent rock star was too far ahead of her time and her rock and roll career dwindled. She slowly embraced country full-time and

went on to release dozens of country hits through the late 1960s. She even had her own television show, *Music Village*, from 1965 to 1967. She recorded singles in German that became huge hits abroad, later becoming an album *Made in Germany* (1968) and headlined a show in Las Vegas as well.

In the early 1970s, Wanda and her husband began regularly attending church and became evangelical Christians, causing her to retreat even further from rock music and from the bad-girl image she had created in the 1950s and '60s. She recorded a gospel album with Capitol, but later left the label because it was largely uninterested in producing more of her religious music. Instead, she set up church tours across the country.

Rockabilly Revival

The early 1980s witnessed a substantial rockabilly revival and Jackson was invited to play some of her old hits in Europe. She toured heavily throughout the decade. She inspired many female country and rock acts who followed her, such as Rosie Flores, with whom she did a tour in 1995. It was her first full American tour since the early 1970s. In 2001, Jackson played at the Rockabilly Festival in Jackson, Tennessee, and in 2003 released *Heart Trouble*, which included guest performances by greats like Elvis Costello. In 2009, the 72-year-old was approached by Jack White of the White Stripes to record a cover album. One of the tracks he selected for her was a racy hit about infidelity by Amy Winehouse called "You Know I'm No Good." She told an interviewer, "At first, I said, 'He's gotta be kidding. He wants me to record this? I don't think it'll be very believable." She agreed to do it, even performing the song on Letterman alongside White in 2011. The well-received resulting album, *The Party Ain't Over*, proved that Wanda Jackson still wasn't ready to give up her title as the Queen of Rockabilly.

2014

"If the enemy ever reach this place (Tuscaloosa, Alabama), they would not leave at this University one brick standing upon the other." Landon C. Garland, President, University of Alabama

For over 120 years, the history of the origin of Auburn University's "War Eagle" battle cry has become a colorful and enigmatic series of stories that, although entertaining, appear to have no historical backing. There are no newspaper articles, records or firsthand accounts available that support the origin of the chant, however there are stories.

Story Number 1

1892 Georgia-Auburn game at Piedmont Park

The first story involves an old Confederate soldier and his pet eagle at the first Auburn game against Georgia during the 1892 football season. This version of the War Eagle story seems to be the most widely accepted among Auburn fans but this story, as well as all of the versions, has many holes within it and there isn't way to prove its authenticity. A similar story claims the eagle was the pet of an Auburn professor. This version has the bird taking flight during that first game against Georgia, or some later game. The professor's bird, according to the tales, was a fixture on the campus of Auburn; however, the name of the professor with the American Bald Eagle has been lost to history.

It should be noted here that Rufus Thomas "Dutch" Dorsey II, left halfback and freshman for the Auburn squad, has his place in history as the first man to score a touchdown in the state of Georgia. The touchdown occurred on February 20, 1892, during that first Auburn game against Georgia, the nativity of the oldest college football rivalry in the South.

Story Number 2

Another story regarding the War Eagle origin involves the 1914 Auburn football season and the game against the Carlisle Indians of the Pennsylvanian Carlisle Indian Industrial School. Allegedly, at that November 25th game, Auburn fans began to randomly chant "War Eagle" because Carlisle's biggest defender was a man named "Bald Eagle." How and why this story came to be is very curious but not as questionable as another origin story stemming from the same game. During the game against Carlisle, an Auburn player, All-Southern End, and later, famed professional baseball player, Legare Hairston, yelled "War Eagle" while making a touchdown. This was the only touchdown of the game, giving Auburn a win for the last game of the 1914 season, 7-0.

Story Number 3

While researching this story, StrangeHistory encountered another story of an Auburn cheerleader named Gus Graydon and the circumstances under which he coined the "War Eagle" battle cry the day before the November 22, 1913 game against Georgia, which Auburn won 21-7. Auburn went undefeated for the 1913 season, was scored on only twice, and won the first of five National Championships.

Strange History Analysis

All of the versions of the "War Eagle" origins are colorful, and have been recited in boardrooms, brothels, barbershops, and at backyard cookouts for over 100 years. However, it must be understood that these stories are unsupported by any available historical documentation. So what if the "War Eagle" battle cry is, in fact, a taunt on historical fact? Let's look at a different set of events that StrangeHistory has uncovered.

Union General John T. Croxton, commander of the 4th Kentucky Infantry

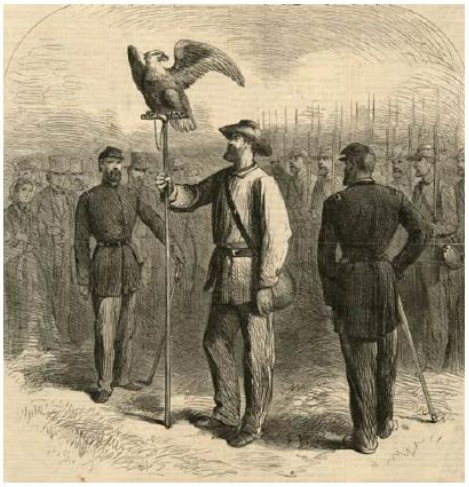
Following the fall of Vicksburg, in 1863, General Ulysses S. Grant's Army of the Tennessee began to fan out throughout the South, taking over towns in northern Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama. On April 4, 1865, Union General John T. Croxton, commander of the 4th Kentucky Infantry, aided by "elements of the 8th Wisconsin Volunteers," marched into Tuscaloosa, Alabama with 1,500 troops to take possession of the South's last major supply point. When Tuscaloosa fell, Union forces burned all but 7 buildings on the campus of th

e University of Alabama, which was a military academy in 1865.

The 8th Wisconsin Volunteer Infantry Regiment, which mustered in Madison, Wisconsin on September 13, 1861, possessed an American bald eagle as its mascot. Her

name was "Old Abe," and her presence with the unit during the Battle of Vicksburg earned her the name "War Eagle." By most accounts the bird was with the 8th Wisconsin from the unit's inception until the unit was disbanded on September 5, 1865, in Demopolis, Alabama. During the Battle of Corinth, Mississippi, Confederate Major-General and former Missouri Governor, Sterling Price, noticed Old Abe and was credited with saying, "That bird must be captured or killed at all hazards, I would rather get that eagle than capture a whole brigade or a dozen battle flags."

All but two of the 8th Wisconsin Volunteers 11 companies are listed as being at the Mobile Campaign in April of 1865, yet it is unclear which “elements of the 8th Wisconsin Volunteers” marched into Tuscaloosa, Alabama with General Croxton. But they were there!



Is it possible that nearly 30 years after the University of Alabama fell to the 8th Wisconsin, and their War Eagle, Old Abe, Auburn fans began to taunt Alabama fans and players by chanting “War Eagle” at the first meeting between the two teams? The matchup on February 22, 1893 is considered to be the first Iron Bowl fought by the bitter rivals, and very well may be the nativity of the “War Eagle” cry. StrangeHistory believes that the evidence from the events, although circumstantial, could conceivably support the theory. To solidify the case for the phrase, it should be noted that the school doing the taunting did not fall to the Union Army during the Civil War. In fact, Auburn, a Methodist school at the opening of the Civil War, closed its doors and became a training ground and hospital for elements of the Confederate army from Alabama. When the Union forces arrived at Auburn University in 1865, they found, by all available accounts, a closed up school and a hospital (“Old Main” building) filled with wounded Texan Confederates.

*StrangeHistory would like to clarify that this theory of the War Eagle origin has been built upon a small mountain of circumstantial evidence. Perhaps an American bald eagle, owned by a Confederate soldier, did fall out of the sky in 1892. Perhaps Legare Hairston randomly yelled “War Eagle” for no apparent reason in 1914. Maybe a cheerleader coined the phrase during Auburn’s first undefeated season. The possibilities are many. The historical documents to support them are few. America’s Strange History!

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WATCH: One porcupine fend off 17 lions

While tracking a pride of lions through the Londolozi Game Reserve in South Africa, local guide Lucien Beaumont witnessed a pretty incredible scene. The 13 lionesses and four lions of the so-called 'Mhangeni pride' had stumbled upon a lone porcupine, and closed in on what they assumed to be some relatively easy prey. As Beaumont notes on his blog, "This is not an ideal place to be, especially if you feature on the menu of a lion!"

But all was not lost for our prickly little friend, because porcupines are practically built for encounters such as this. Porcupines have short, stumpy tails tipped with hollow 'rattle quills' that produce a loud, hissing noise when the animal shakes its backside. The noise is supposed to confuse and distract a porcupine's predators long enough for it to shuffle away, but if that doesn't work, it's time for Plan B. As you can see in the video above, Plan B involves manoeuvring that impressive array of quills close enough that they'll get caught up in skin and fur of whatever is trying to eat you, causing them a whole lot more pain that it does you.

"The quills have micro-barbs, which hook into the face or paws of a predator that may get too close. The quills simply pull out of the porcupines skin without causing damage to the prickly creature," Beaumont writes at his blog. "The predator then has to deal with a painful quill. The downside of this is that there is a chance of the quill breaking off in the skin and this can cause a major infection. The porcupine simply re-grows any lost quills – the quills are a type of fused hair."

Fortunately for the porcupine, Plan B was super-effective, and the lions lost interest and wandered off. If only all of life's problems could be solved by backing awkwardly into them.

Source: io9

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13 BUMPS ROAD REVISITED

13 BUMPS KEEP RETURNING.
There is this one road in Watchung, I'm not sure the name of it but it's right off of Route 22, that is known as 13 Bumps. It is a long curving road that winds back and forth in a continuous "S" shape. When you drive up the road, there are 13 large bumps in the middle of the road. The story says that 13 witches were buried on the road. Many, many years later, when the road was paved, 13 bumps emerged out of the ground. The bumps were removed and paved flat. Yet, they returned.

The process continued and the same reaction occurred. Anyway, it's a good scare late at night. You're supposed to count the bumps on the way up and if you only count 12 you're supposed to get the hell out of there because there is a witch wandering around on the side of the hill. Every time I go there I'm either drunk or high so I count like 52 or like 5 bumps, so I'm looking around for a hell of a lot of witches or I'm wondering what the hell is going on. Either way I did see witches for real, but I don't know if that was just the substance abuse going to work.

13 BUMPS FOR 13 SISTERS
Hi, my name is Kyle LeFever and I thought you might be interested in some of the local legends in my neighborhood. The first is the thirteen bumps, and this about thirteen sisters who in the mid 1700's who killed many of children in the local town of Feltville, which is now part of the Watchung Reservation. The sisters were put on trial and burned. Their bodies were buried on a dirt road, which is Johnston Drive in Watchung. Whenever the local Townspeople would drive over the bodies they would be reminded of those they lost.

Legend has it that if you drive over the bumps and count them, then say "thirteen witches" and turn around, you can see the witches following behind your car. So far I have tried this many times with no avail, but the thirteen bumps are definately there.

13 BUMPS A MUNDANE EXPERIENCE
As a person employed in the area of 13 bumps Road, I have heard many different stories about the bumps, which are definitely noticeable. I heard of witches burial grounds, cult activities and other strange stuff. But the truth as I was told by an old timer is much more mundane. The road in question is Johnston Drive with some steep inclines. The old timer told me the bumps were built in the days of Horse and carriage. These bumps prevented the carriages from rolling down the declines when they stopped to make a delivery. The rumors were most likely started by teenagers sometime after, because in the fog the road is pretty spooky.
- BG

13 BUMPS WITCHES

Here is a little something that has been an local legend in my home town for quite some time. It is so widely known around here, between my friends, and family, and just about anybody that I have met from this area.

In Scotch Plains there is a long winding road called Johnston Drive. It is decorated with many beautiful homes, and cuts into the side of the Watchung Mountains. The story goes that back in the early 1900's, there was this coven of witches, who cast spells on early settlers of this mountain range. They felt that their home was being violated by all of the newcomers trying to build houses and communities around this area. The coven consisted of thirteen witches, all of whom were supposed to be related. They openly cast spells on the settlers trying to bring bad luck and banishment.

Supposedly the men of the new community grew very aggravated of all this, and took matters in to there own hands one day. They killed all thirteen witches by hanging them from trees somewhere in the mountains, and then proceeded to burn their bodies. They then buried their remains under what is now Johnston Drive.

Years have passed since this all happened, and the road has since been constructed (killing one of the workers in the process). One week after the paving of the road, thirteen large bumps in the middle of the road appeared. Supposedly these were caused by the remains of the witches.

About 15 or 20 years had passed, with all this talk about the witches and the bumps on Johnston Drive, so in 1993 the road was finally dug up along with the bumps, leveled off, and repaved. Two days later the bumps pushed there way up again... all thirteen of them.

This road has become a major attraction for teenagers just getting their licenses. They set out to drive over the thirteen bumps on Johnston Drive with their girlfriends, telling them the same story I have just told. Of course the girls get freaked out, and the guy feels cool to tell the tale, but is it really a fictional urban legend, or a factual story?

I guess for some who believe in it, it is fact, and a part of growing up in Weird NJ.
- Jason R.

For More stories on 13 Bumps Road, see Weird NJ issue #13.

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By J Nathan Couch on November 3, 2014

Located just outside of Macedonia, the tiny village of Novo Selo is at the heart of a peculiar sort of controversy. Is this photograph of an actual werewolf skull?

A local farmer by the name of Trayche was out plowing a new section of field when he uncovered a strange box that was chained shut. Curiosity quickly got the best of him and he cut the chain away, likely hoping to find valuables. What he instead found was very disturbing skull with human and canine characteristics.

A writer by the name of Filip Ganov was staying in the village recently while researching a book unrelated to such peculiar topics. Filip had a chance encounter with Trayche, who showed him the skull and allowed him to take the photographs featured here.

Filip showed the photographs to local wildlife officials who theorized it belonged to a wolf with Paget's disease, a genetic condition that causes bone mutation.

Werewolf skull found in a box

The photographs arrived at *Cult of Weird* courtesy of Filip, as a way of sharing a piece of Bulgarian folklore with the world at large.

And folklore is most likely exactly what it is. Right away I see two major problems with this supposed werewolf skull. For one, the box it allegedly was buried in is in remarkable condition for something that has been buried in a field for, perhaps, decades. Also, the writing on the inside lid of the crate are Cyrillic characters that translate into "Attention Danger Werewolf" in Bulgarian. Wouldn't some well-meaning werewolf hunter put such a warning on the outside of the box? I think the only real mystery here, is the reason behind such a hoax? But that's just my opinion, feel free to disagree.

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What Happened to Doomsday Prophet Harold Camping After the World Didn't End? | VICE | United States

vice.com

November 6, 2014

ByRick Paulas

In a nondescript building in Oakland, between a store that specializes in automobile tint and a palm reader, sits the headquarters of Family Radio, a Christian-based network that spreads " the word of God to the world." In 2011, they spent over $100 million dollars spreading God's word that the world was going to end.

It didn't, which begs the question: What happens after doomsday comes and goes?

It's probably best to start at the beginning. Family Radio was founded in 1958 by Dick Palmquist and Harold Camping as a fairly orthodox radio station, with programs alternating between blocks of early American hymns, contemporary Christian music, and original evangelism like Camping's daily show *Open Forum*, where he responded to call-in questions about the Bible. But over the years, the mission morphed.

"There was a problem with Harold," said Matt Tuter, a longtime and now-former employee of the network.

All Family Radio decisions were intended to be made by a three-person Board of Directors, one of which was Camping. But as members retired or became too ill to continue, Camping handpicked their replacements. "[They] were incapable of telling Harold 'no' on anything," said Tuter. When Camping could control the network as he pleased, the doomsday predictions began.

Camping's first big prediction was for the rapture to occur on September 4 or 6, 1994. The "or" is significant, evidence of his hesitancy, which extended to the punctuation on the title of his book, 1994?. Camping arrived at those specific dates through a convoluted crunching of Biblical numbers. (He believed Jesus died on April 1, 33 AD, exactly 1978 years before April 1, 2011, and when you multiply that by the days in a solar year, and divide it by *zzzz...*) As a result of his obsession, nearly every *Open Forum* between '92 and '94 was dominated by Camping detailing his proof to enraptured listeners around the world.

"It was a very distressing thing," said Tuter. "This was a real left-handed turn."

The predictions started getting in the way of the network's Christian-based missions. In 1993, the organization had an opportunity to distribute non-registered Bibles throughout China, an unheard-of happening in the country. But Camping would only approve if they'd also promote his book. "I said, 'So you're telling me your damn book is co-equal with the Bible,' and his words were 'Yes, it is,'" said Tuter. "I regret to this day I didn't knock his head off." Instead, they spent millions of listener-donated dollars to spread his false prophecy.

"There were a lot of people who sold their houses, who gave up their life savings," said Tuter.

"And Harold thought it was funny. He would come into my office and say, 'So-and-so called me. They're broke, but I'm not giving their money back.' Harold was a very twisted man."

Photo via Flickr user Len Matthews

1994 came and went, and the world was still standing. Which, you'd think, would end someone's credibility and, thusly, their source of income. And donations *did* wane, but only for a time. Soon enough, the topic of apocalypse was dropped from Camping's show and things normalized. "When Harold would shut up and be normal, people would support the organization," said Tuter. But while he was normal on-air, away from the microphone Camping was crunching more numbers and planning for the biggest doomsday media blitz ever.

In 2003, Family Radio sold off a station in Stockton for $65 million. In 2005, they swapped their San Francisco-based FM station with CBS's AM station, netting $40 million in the deal. And between 1997 and 2011, they brought in over $216 million in donations. So when the time was right—in this case May 21, 2011—Camping and his puppet board of directors blanketed the world with their warnings. Park bench ads were purchased around the country. Over 3,000 billboards were installed around the world. And a five-car caravan toured America and Canada, handing out pamphlets that prepped unbelievers for the end. "We had a pool of about $100 million dollars," said Tuter, "and he spent it like no tomorrow."

So, just who spent their time and money for this nonsense? One oft-quoted report told of a New York transportation agency worker who donated $150,000 of his savings to Camping's doomsday cause.

"One striking thing about the group/movement was its diversity, in both racial, ethnic terms, and socio-economic terms," said Charles Sarno, an associate professor of sociology at Holy Names University who's spent the past few years writing a book about Camping and Family Radio. "The educational backgrounds appeared to vary greatly from Ph.D.s to high school graduates. And the group did seem to attract a disproportionate number of engineers and engineering types, like Camping himself."

Sarno also doesn't use the word "cult" when describing Family Radio, due to its pejorative connotations. "Family Radio has traversed all points on this spectrum and it currently 'fluctuates,' depending on the message being broadcast and who is listening." Like sports radio, in other words—just because a certain show has super-fans doesn't mean they're into the entire channel.

But just because it's not a "cult" doesn't mean it's benign. When you reach millions of true believers, you're going to wind up attracting some nuts. Tuter claims he personally received

death threats for his skepticism. "We were a step away from Jonestown," he said. "In fact, Harold Camping was very enamored with Jim Jones. We had equipment that used to belong to People's Temple. He loved to show it off."

Even true believers had to reevaluate things when, on May 22, the world was still here. (Camping half-heartedly "clarified" that his May 21 prediction regarded final judgement, while the *actual* day of apocalypse wasn't until October 21. By that point, most folks didn't even have it in them to make fun.) "Many coped by deferring to the Bible and God as their ultimate source of truth," said Helen Shoemaker, Sarno's co-writer. "Seemingly, but respectfully, putting Camping in the benign position of a wise, but fallible human."

And so began the long slide into debt. The network, valued at $135 million in 2007, dwindled down to $29.2 million by the end of 2011 due to the spending spree. Donations dropped precipitously. In 2012, the network received only $6.2 million in donations, which seems like a lot, but doesn't come close to the $26 million in yearly expenses they needed to stay afloat. And unlike '94, Family Radio no longer had their ace-up-their-sleeve: the ability to ask new listeners for donations. "They sold the three biggest stations," said Tuter. "It's basically dying a slow death."

Following the false predictions, Camping apologized on a now-removed blog post, saying " even the most sincere and zealous of us can be mistaken." In fact, Camping has been excised from the Family Radio website. One of the remaining artifacts is a somewhat depressing video where he explains why there are "anti-Harold Camping websites on the internet." On December 15, 2013, after roughly 13 failed predictions, the end finally came for the 92-year-old Camping. He died in his Alameda home due to complications from a fall.

But Family Radio isn't dead just yet. And neither is Harold Camping.

If you live in the Bay Area, flip on 610 AM. If you're in Buffalo, try 89.9 FM. Or just forgo terrestrial radio and stream online. But my suggestion is, if you find yourself driving through the middle of nowhere late at night, unplug your iPod and give the Scan button a push. If it's around 6:30 on a weeknight, and your radio happens to pick up the right station, you might just hear the man's voice.

"I've had many people tell me that was what attracted them. It was his voice," said Tuter. "They were seduced."

Listen for a few minutes, but do so hesitantly. This is the voice, after all, that tricked people into believing the world was coming to an end.

(Emails to Family Radio went unreturned, as did my calls, although I'd like to point out that the woman answering the phone was very pleasant.)

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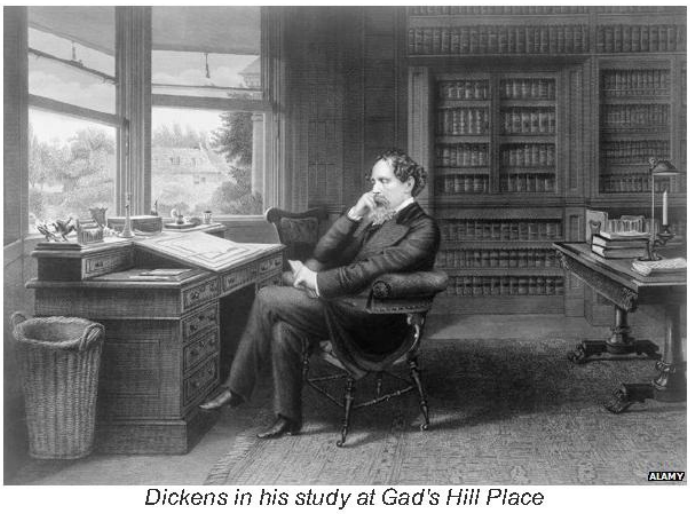
Why did Charles Dickens have a personal postbox?

9 December 2014 bbc.com



Dickens in his study at Gad's Hill Place

In the 19th Century, when the postal service was in its infancy, Charles Dickens lobbied for his own personal letterbox, writes Kathryn Westcott.

It's Christmas 1869 and Charles Dickens, prolific letter writer, is hurriedly finishing off a correspondence. "The postman is waiting at the gate to tramp through the snow to Rochester and is unlawfully drinking a glass of gin while I write this," Dickens reveals to his friend Charles Kent.

The postman was a familiar sight at Dickens's Georgian home, Gad's Hill Place in Higham, Kent. A postbox, installed by the postal service at the author's request, was one of the earliest wall-boxes to be introduced in Britain, following the introduction of the pillar box across the nation by fellow writer Anthony Trollope in 1852.

Dickens had personally lobbied for that postbox in 1859. Perhaps acting on a tip-off by friend and writer Edmund Yates, who worked in the Postmaster General's office, he replies to a correspondence from Yates stating:

"I think that no one seeing the place can well doubt that my house at Gad's Hill is the place for the letter-box. The wall is accessible by all sorts and conditions of men, on the bold high road, and the house altogether is the great landmark of the whole neighbourhood. Captain Goldsmith's house is up a lane considerably off the high road; but he has a garden wall abutting on the road itself..."

Dickens's postbag and box

The letter was uncovered by Dickens enthusiast Jennifer Ide, a tour guide at Gad's Hill Place. Ide came across the decommissioned box a few years ago. She, along with the Charles Dickens Centre (Gad's Hill) Charitable Trust

and the Letter Box Study Group, recently asked the Royal Mail to put it back into service. On Wednesday it is being recommissioned.

According to Ide, when Dickens moved to Gad's Hill, the closest place to send a letter was the village of Higham just over a mile away. "It was not an easy road - the return journey would have involved a very steep hill," says Ide. She says Dickens was often seen posting letters in Rochester, which was further away, probably because he had missed the morning Higham post. In Rochester, in 1866, the final dispatch would be 23:00, to arrive in London the next morning.

Over 14,000 letters written by Dickens are recorded in the Oxford Pilgrim Edition of his correspondence between 1820 and his death in June 1870.

"Dickens was a brilliant letter writer," says Claire Tomalin, author and Dickens biographer. "His letters were almost like a performance. They gave a vivid sense of what he was like and what he had been up to." But she says that in his later years, he was more circumspect about what he revealed in them - and they were generally shorter than previous letters. "There was a fear that his letters might be used to create some kind of biography," she says.

Dickens letters

Dickens's personal postbag and box, and letters dispatched from Gad's Hill (Images courtesy of Guildhall Museum, Rochester)

By the time he moved to Gad's Hill, Dickens had left his wife and had embarked on a secret affair with a young actress. A letter outlining the reasons for the separation somehow found its way into the British and American newspapers.

Like many Victorians, Dickens burned letters. In 1860, he held a huge bonfire at Gad's Hill, consigning to the flames "the accumulated letters and papers of 20 years". According to an eyewitnesses, the author said he wanted his own letters to be treated in the same way.

Dickens died at Gad's Hill in the evening of 9 June 1870. According to reports, he had written letters that day. Perhaps the postman waiting outside became one of the first people outside the immediate family to learn of the death of the great man of letters.

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Why do flamingos fly to Siberia risking death from the winter cold?

siberiantimes.com

Two young birds saved after taking a seriously wrong turn during migration.

Pink flamingo walking along Usa river in Mezhdurechensk.
Picture: social media

Four flamingos - all in different locations - got into severe difficulties in Siberia this week after apparently flying north instead of south. One was found hungry and cold by fishermen on the ice of a lake in Tomsk region. They rescued and warmed the bird before sending it to Seversky Zoo, where it is being nursed back to health after suffering mild frostbite.

Another case ended in tragedy after a young flamingo, believed to be on its first migration, fell out of the sky in the Evenkia district of vast Krasnoyarsk region - only 500 km from the Arctic Circle - by chance landing almost at the feet of a hunter, Petr Sidorkin.

He wrapped the bird in clothes and carried it home where his wife Nadezhda fed it with mashed carrots, beets, fish and minced meat, on the recommendation of the nature care department of the local administration.

Pink flamingo found in Evenkia

'The bird was severely emaciated and was in a critical condition when it came to Royev Ruchey.' Picture: Royev Ruchey

On 5 November, the bird was handed over to Royev Ruchey Zoo in Krasnoyarsk, but it did not survive despite the best efforts of staff. 'Sadly, the bird is dead,' zoo spokeswoman Ekaterina Mikhailova told The Siberian Times.

'The bird was severely emaciated and was in a critical condition when it came to Royev Ruchey. The body temperature was extremely low, and its legs were necrotic (due to frostbite).

'There were severe frosts in Evenkiya, down to about minus 30C and the bird could not get

food at least several days because the lakes were frozen. Despite all the efforts of our veterinarians, we could not save it.'

Pink flamingo in Mezhdurechensk

'In the past 100 years flamingos arrived about two dozen times, but in Mezhdurechensk, this type of bird was spotted for the first time.' Picture: social media

More trauma struck another flamingo which landed exhausted near a village on the Turochack district of the mountainous Altai Republic. A local dog bit the surprising visitor but not seriously.

The bird was taken to the pioneering Novosibirsk Centre for the Rehabilitation of Birds of Prey. Here the bird was examined, its wounds were treated and bandaged. Elena Shnaider, head of the centre, then passed the flamingo to Novosibirsk Zoo.

Evgenia Pirozhkova, the zoo's press secretary, said: 'The bird feels better and if all goes well - as we hope - it will stay at zoo, because it cannot be released into the wild due to the injuries. Though it will be our first pink flamingo, we have good conditions for such a bird.'

Pink flamingo in Novosibirsk

Pink flamingo in Novosibirsk Centre for the Rehabilitation of Birds of Prey. Picture: Elena Shnaider

Yet another flamingo was seen in Mezhdurechensk, Kemerovo region, walking on the snowy bank of the Usa River. Specialists from 'Kuznetsk Alatau' Reserve were summoned and tried to catch the bird. But it went into the river and crossed to the other side. Later it was seen flying to an island in the river.

'We did not go there to catch the bird. Firstly, it is dangerous, and secondly, once it flies well, it can also fly away for the winter,' said director Alexey Vasilchenko, who was optimistic the flamingo could fly to a warmer climate. The bird needs to rest and eat well to gain strength for the trip.'

He revealed that the arrival of wayward flamingos is not unknown in this part of Siberia.

'In the past 100 years flamingos arrived about two dozen times, but in Mezhdurechensk, this type of bird was spotted for the first time. It was quite a young bird, and has grey colouring. Only on the neck and under the wing could be seen a little pink.

'But the older the bird is, the brighter is the colour. Apparently, it strayed from the flock and

got lost here. And could not fly (back) because all the passes (through the mountains) were hit by heavy snowfall.'

Pink flamingo found by fishermen on the ice of a lake in Tomsk region goes to Seversk zoo. Pictures: Regional Committee for Environmental Protection, Seversk zoo

But why do flamingos stray to Siberia? What causes this fault in their navigation system. The birds are greater flamingos, common in Africa, southern Europe, as well as south and south west Asia. It is unclear where these flamingos are from.

Pink flamingo in Tomsk region

Pink flamingo in Tomsk region

Pink flamingo in Tomsk region

The closest population of flamingos is in Kazakhstan, with many birds migrating to Azerbaijan for the winter. The birds do not necessarily migrate but do so if their food source is frozen or threatened.

Still, the puzzle is why they took a wrong turn and ended up in Siberia. Local experts believe the answer is in unusual climactic conditions as they migrated. A warm front may have fooled the birds into flying north but they rapidly encountered the extreme cold.

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Acme building graffitied with Wile E. Coyote, Road Runner

By JC Sevcik | Nov. 5, 2014 at 3:55 PM

Employees returning to work Monday morning at Minneapolis' Acme Foundry found cardboard cutouts of Warner Bros. Looney Tunes attached to the brick building's facade, Wile E. Coyote chasing the Roadrunner. (Photo courtesy of Acme Foundry)

MINNEAPOLIS, Nov. 5 (UPI) -- When Jeff Bursh, president of family-owned Acme Foundry, a Minneapolis manufacturer of gray and ductile iron castings, left the office Sunday around 5, the facade of the brick building was as it had been for years, but when he returned to work Monday morning, he found a fun surprise -- some unknown artist added an image of Wile E. Coyote chasing the Roadrunner to Acme's entrance.

"We get our fair share of graffiti, but this is the first time anyone's linked the company to Looney Tunes," business manager Monica Sweeney told UPI.

"We've been in business for over 100 years. I'm surprised it took this long."

The Warner Bros. characters are actually cardboard cutouts, affixed to the entrance with adhesive squares. Though the non-destructive graffiti won't hold up too long once bad weather comes, Acme plans to keep the cutouts up as long as they can.

"It's too humorous not too," Sweeney said.

"Though if the city were to ask us to remove it, we would," she added.

When asked to comment on whether it had something against cute, the city of Minneapolis did not reply.

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Witness gave evidence in rape case for an hour before anyone realised she wasn't speaking English

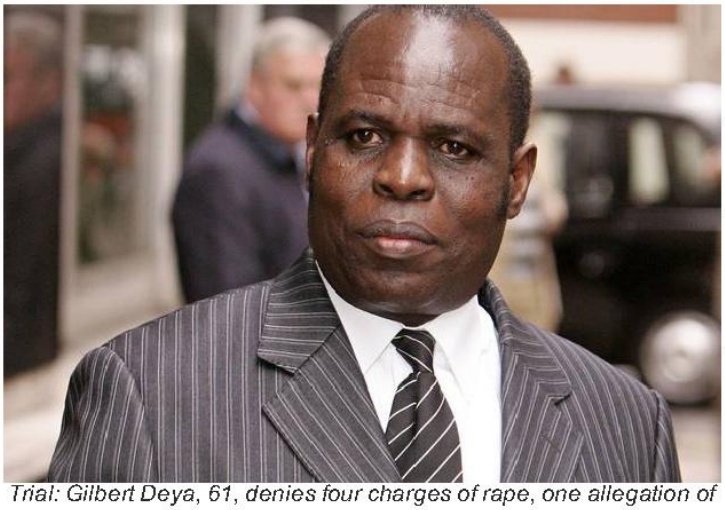
Published: 10 December 2014 standard.co.uk

A suspected rape victim gave evidence in court for more than an hour before anyone realised she was not speaking English.

The hugely embarrassing blunder took place at Inner London Crown Court where a charismatic African preacher is charged with sexual offences.

The witness - who uses a distinctive Creole native to Sierra Leone - was repeatedly told by barristers to speak more slowly and stand further back from the microphone.

Lawyers blamed her accent and the “acoustics” of the courtroom for being unable to understand her - until court clerk Christiana Kyemenu-Caiquo intervened.



Trial: Gilbert Deya, 61, denies four charges of rape, one allegation of attempted rape, two of sexual assault and one of battery

She also hails from Sierra Leone and told Judge Nicholas Madge that the 38-year-old was in fact speaking Krio, an African Creole variant.

In desperation the judge swore the clerk in as an intermediary for the witness, with a new clerk replacing her on the bench.

But Kyemenu-Caiquo was barely needed as an interpreter as the witness was reduced to repeating the words, “I can’t remember”, in response to almost every question.

She was giving evidence against self-styled “Archbishop” Gilbert Deya, 61, who denies four charges of rape, one allegation of attempted rape, two of sexual assault and one of battery.

The preacher, who runs Gilbert Deya Ministries - which is said to have a UK membership of 36,000 - originally hails from Kenya.

He runs his church from a large unit on an industrial estate on the edge of Peckham, where he lives.

When the key prosecution witness, who cannot be named for legal reasons, gave evidence, a large proportion of what she said was impossible to understand.

The woman, who was often in tears, was not offered a seat during nearly an entire day in the witness box.

The witness is said to have been abused by Deya for up to eight years and was raped by him four times, and subjected to other sexual indignities.

The case continues.

UK's first ever 'cereal café' opens in Shoreditch

Jailed for life: jilted boyfriend who stabbed nurse to death and calmly rolled up a cigarette

Police officer run over as he tried to stop car in East Dulwich

Angelina Jolie: I was a rebel, so I struggle saying no to daughters' tattoo questions

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- Nov 14, 2014 07:58
- By Nina Massey

Janina Kolkiewicz was declared dead by a doctor and sent to cold storage before she made an astonishing recovery

Morgue: After the astonishing recovery Ms Kolkiewicz returned home to warm up

A 91-year-old woman who spent 11 hours in cold storage gave morgue staff the shock of their lives when she started moving in her body bag.

Janina Kolkiewicz was declared dead by a family doctor, and after her miracle recovery simply complained to her family of feeling cold.

Polish officials have since launched an investigation into how the pensioner could have been sent to the morgue alive.

After the astonishing recovery Ms Kolkiewicz returned home to warm up with a bowl of soup and two pancakes, Polish newspaper Dziennik Wschodni reports.

The pensioner's family and doctor said they had been left in shock - with the doctor admitting he had never known anything like this before.

Her niece Bogumil Kołkiewicz had called the medic in the eastern Polish town of Ostrow Lubelski after coming home one morning to find that her aunt did not appear to be breathing or to have a pulse.

After an examination, the woman was declared dead and she was taken to the morgue.

He family even started making arrangements for a funeral in two days' time.

"I was sure she was dead," Dr Wieslawa Czyz told the television channel TVP.

"I'm stunned, I don't understand what happened. Her heart had stopped beating, she was no longer breathing."

Just a few hours later morgue staff called Ms Kołkiewicz to report the astonishing news that she was not dead.

Ms Kolkiewicz told her relatives she felt "normal, fine" after returning home, and she is apparently unaware of how near she came to the grave.

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Woman dies after cannibal eats her face

By Reuters

November 7, 2014 | 1:35pm

LONDON — British police confronted a man trying to eat the eyeball and face of a woman and used a stun gun on the cannibal, who later died, local media quoted witnesses as saying.

The woman was pronounced dead at the scene and a murder investigation has been opened.

Police said they were called to a hostel in the village of Argoed in South Wales on Thursday after reports of a man attacking a woman.

Security staff at the Sirhowy Arms discovered the 34-year-old man, who had been released from prison two weeks ago, eating the woman, a 22-year-old believed to be his girlfriend, according to witnesses quoted by the South Wales Evening Post.

Police shot the man with a Taser. He became unresponsive and died, despite attempts by paramedics to save him, police said.

Many details of the incident were not immediately clear.

“This animal was eating this girl to death,” the South Wales Evening Post quoted Jill Edwards, who lives near the hostel, as saying.

The attack drew comparisons with Hannibal Lecter, a fictional murderer who ate his victims.

“He went Hannibal Lecter on the woman, he gouged her eyeball out, ate them and ate half her face,” the South Wales Evening Post quoted Lyn Beasley as saying.

A spokesman for Welsh police declined to supply further details of the attack, citing the murder investigation. Argoed, a former coal-mining village, is about 160 miles (260 kilometers) west of London.

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Stop Press - 2014 Champion!

The 2014 championships were held on 19th July 2014 and the winner was a snail called Wells owned and trained by Zeben Butler-Alldred, aged 5, from London. Wells completed the course in 3 minutes 19 seconds, a slow time because of the heat. Zeben was on holiday in West Norfolk and named his snail after the local town Wells which he liked.

2014 Snail Racing Champion

Zeben Butler-Alldred with his winning snail Wells. Photo: © Tony Scase News Service Ltd

Wells the snail winning the 2014 championship. Photo: © Tony Scase News Service Ltd

The start - and they are off with crowds cheering. Photo: © Tony Scase News Service Ltd

Some snails were elaborately decorated but Wells the snail took an early lead. Photos: © Tony Scase News Service Ltd

The next Championships will be held on 18 July 2015 on the cricket field at Congham, Norfolk, UK (nearest postcode PE32 1AH).

Press release 1

Press release 2

Archive of 2013 results

Archive of 2012 results

Archive of 2011 results

Archive of 2010 results

Archive of 2009 results

Archive of 2008 results

For more information contact:
info@snailracing.net

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World Stinging Nettle Eating Championship attracts record crowd

A record crowd turned out to watch the World Stinging Nettle Eating championships. The Sunday Telegraph went along, to witness the competitors' agony.

In a sunny garden in deepest Dorset yesterday 65 people – their faces rigid with pain and disgust – gathered in a quest to be crowned the King of the Stingers.

There is no easy route to winning the World Stinging Nettle Eating Championship, held each year in the village of Marshwood near Bridport. It takes skill, it takes endurance ... it takes great blistering chunks out of what used to be your taste buds.

Smart competitors squash the leaves into tight little balls which they try to throw straight to the back molars. Then you try to munch them up and swallow with as little contact as possible. The problems begin when the nettles start to back up in the mouth and ... arrrrrgh!

Competitors are served two-foot-long stalks of nettles from which they must pluck and devour the leaves. The bare stalks are then measured and the winner, after an hour of combat, is the one with the greatest accumulated length.

"They taste totally foul, and everything comes out bright green for a few days afterwards," shrugged Simon Slee, 48, the reigning world record holder with 76 feet. "Apart from that it's really not too bad. You need focus and rhythm and some beer to take the taste away."

The contest began more than 20 years ago when two customers at Marshwood's 16th century Bottle Inn argued over who had the worst infestation of stinging nettles.

"One of them said, 'I'll eat any nettle of yours that's longer than mine'" said Rory Macleod, 34, the pub landlord. "And so they had a competition. They're both dead now. It's become a highly competitive event, very macho, and we get hundreds of people coming down here. We're now seeing a lot of east Europeans coming over who take the whole thing very seriously."

With the seriousness has, sadly, come a temptation to bend the rules. Past competitors have been accused of smuggling their own low toxicity nettles into the competition, while sneaking bio-engineered, high toxicity, Franken-nettles onto their opponent's plates.

"You can only eat the nettles we supply," said judge Richard Hooper, who grows them in his field outside the village. "Also you have to keep them down. If you spit them out, or anything worse, it doesn't count. Anyone who goes to the toilet is automatically disqualified." Which brings us to the delicate problem of what seasoned stinger scoffers know as "green bearding". This tends to occur with the onset of facial paralysis and judges must pay close attention to the amount of emerald-hued drool being emitted.

Past competitors have travelled from as far away as Canada and Australia, but the

championship now appears on track to go truly global. "There's interest from all over the world," says Mr Macleod.

"I sort of inherited the competition when I took over the pub last year and I can't believe how big it has become."

A record 1,000 crowd filled the pub's gardens yesterday. Many were offering to take part, although the entry is strictly fixed at 65.

"There are some events you just have to be at," said Harry Kinsella, 23, a trainee solicitor from Kettering.

"I've always liked nettles. When I was at university we had a nude stinging nettle rolling competition and it was the best thing ever, although this may be even better."

Critical to the championship's outcome is the quality and character of each season's nettles. Much is determined by the weather with lush, moist plants considered more palatable than the drier variety. Nearly all the big scores have been achieved after wet conditions.

The contest has separate men's and women's sections. This year's male champion, Mike Hobbs, landlord of the New Inn at West Knightley, near Dorchester, managed to consume 48ft of nettles. The female winner was Mel Lang of West Bay, Dorset, who finished on level terms with Mr Hobbs.

In theory there's plenty to be said for nettle eating. The plant properly known as urtica docia is a nutritional powerhouse, rich in iron, potassium, calcium and abundant vitamins. They have been used in traditional English stews, teas and beers for centuries, while the Italians cherish them for pesto and the Scandinavians make a knockout nettle soup called Nasselsoppa.

The complications come with eating the things raw. Urtica is covered in thousands of microscopic hypodermic needles each filled with boric acid. On contact the needles break, causing the acid to flood over and burn the skin.

"They are wonderful plants really," waxed Simon yesterday. "Very much misunderstood." Which is just as well as Dorset yesterday was no place for weeds.

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Saturday 06 December 2014

World's fattest man Keith Martin dies, aged 44

Weight-loss surgery could not save Londoner Keith Martin, 44, who died from pneumonia following a lengthy battle with his weight

The world's fattest man Keith Martin The world's fattest man Keith Martin Photo: Jenny Goodall/Daily Mail/REX Photo: Jenny Goodall/Daily Mail/REX

A Londoner who was officially the fattest man in the world has died.

Keith Martin, 44, died from pneumonia following a lengthy battle with his weight.

It happened just eight months after Mr Martin - who weighed 70 stone at his heaviest - had undergone a successful gastric sleeve which removed three-quarters of his stomach.

Now the surgeon who tried to save him with life-changing weight-loss surgery is calling for the government to swiftly impose a fast-food tax as he backed NHS plans to offer more gastric surgeries to high-risk patients.

If he had lived he would have lost hundreds of pounds and regained his ability to walk and live a normal life, according to head surgeon Kesava Mannur who operated on Mr Martin at Homerton Hospital last year.

Mr Mannur supports new NHS guidelines which encourage doctors to suggest weight-loss surgery for anyone with a BMI higher than 30 and type 2 diabetes.

That means up to two million people could be eligible - and if they all agreed to surgery it would cost the NHS £12billion.

In the wake of Chancellor George Osborne's tax reform revelations in this week's autumn statement, Mr Mannur said: "The government needs to make unhealthy fast food more expensive.

"Otherwise we'll continue to see more and more people like Keith. In the past few years I have treated several people who weighed between 45 to 60 stone.

"In Keith's case, it's a shame because he'd had successful surgery despite being high-risk because of his size. It was unlucky he then caught pneumonia.

"Bariatric surgery can be a very good thing for the people who need it.

"We can't ignore they are here and they need help. Once a patient hits a BMI of 30-35 it is extremely difficult for them to lose weight on their own. If they are not treated they can require a lot of medical help which can be very costly.

"If they can get the weight off they can improve their health and mobility and maybe contribute to society rather than being a burden.

"But the thing that does need to change quickly is how easy it is for people to access very cheap, unhealthy fast food.

"Society needs to do more to encourage children to be healthy from a young age. They need to learn early about physical activity and a healthy diet.

"People need access to gyms and outdoor spaces where they can walk and play while feeling safe. It will be much better for everyone in the long run."

Before he died in March, unemployed Mr Martin admitted much of the weight had come from eating huge amounts of super-cheap fast food.

He would gorge on 20,000 calories a day - almost 10 times the recommended amount - having six-egg fry-ups for breakfast then pizzas, kebabs, Chinese takeaways and Big Macs for lunch and dinner all washed down with six pints of coffee and two litres of fizzy drinks.

He'd also snack on sandwiches, chocolate, crisps, sweets and biscuits.

Mr Mannur added: "Keith, like many people, had some emotional issues and he turned to food for comfort.

"That type of behaviour is nothing new, but what is new is how easy it is for people in that situation to buy a lot of cheap junk food."

Mr Martin left behind his two sisters - Sharon and Tina - who cared for him for many years leading up to his death.

Speaking from the home they shared in west London, Tina Martin said: "We're still grieving. We miss him very much."

Mr Martin's surgery was filmed for Channel 5 documentary 70 Stone & Almost Dead.

A hopeful Mr Martin said beforehand: "I'd resigned myself that either I was going to die in my bed or I was going to kill myself. But now I think 'you stupid person'.

"I'm a lot more confident than I used to be. I feel a lot happier.

"In a few months' time I want to be up and walking

"I know the only person to blame is me. All those years wasted. I'm not going to waste

anymore of it. "

Having been stuck in his house for ten years and bedridden for several years due to his size, Mr Martin was able to drop 25 stone in order to qualify for the surgery after switching to a 2,000 calorie a day diet.

But just a week after the procedure he discharged himself from the hospital, against doctors' orders, because he was homesick.

By October 2013 he was back in hospital with septic shock and dehydration. Two weeks later he contracted pneumonia.

Mr Martin spent four months in hospital before he was released in February 2014, having been deemed medically fit. His weight had dropped to 39 stone

After being transported home he said: "I feel great about surviving the operation.

"It gives me a chance now to go do some of the things I wanted to do - to get myself up and walking, take my dog Benji out for a walk.

"This is the end of one chapter and the beginning of a new chapter. Where it takes me I don't know, but it's going to be fun finding out."

But just a month later he was dead.

Prior to the weight-loss surgery, Mr Martin recorded a video message to his family in case he didn't survive.

He said: "Hi guys, I just wanted to let you know that I love you guys and thanks for being there for me. You can tell the rest of the family I love them and thanks for the support. Take care of each other."

Mr Martin's weight ballooned after he became seriously depressed in his twenties.

He blamed blamed the bingeing on depression and anxiety which he developed after his mother died - also of pneumonia - when he was 16.

Mr Martin, who used to spend his days playing video games and watching TV, explained in 2012: "I started eating to ease the pain and before I knew it, I was binging every time something upset me.

"I've always been depressed. I am an agoraphobic - I'm afraid of public places - but it was never treated.

"I just want to be happy, without needing food to make me happy."

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WW I Canadian soldier's remains identified

2014/11/05 cbc.ca

Sidney Halliday died in the Battle of Amiens, 1918

By Lynne Chichakian and Liam O'Rinn / Doc Zone, CBC News Posted: Nov 05, 2014 11:00 AM ET Last Updated: Nov 05, 2014 6:46 PM ET

The remains of a previously unknown soldier are those of Canadian Pte. Sidney Halliday, who fought in the First World War.

The Department of National Defence announced today that they had identified Halliday's remains, one of eight bodies discovered together in France in 2006. DND had revealed the identities of four other soldiers on Sept. 27.

- **4 WW I Canadian soldiers' remains identified**
- **Forgotten No More: The Lost Men of the 78th | Doc Zone**

It was only when scientific avenues of investigation had been exhausted that a momentary gesture of love a century ago proved to be the key in identifying the remains.

Pte. Sidney Halliday served with the 78th Battalion and died in the Battle of Amiens in 1918. (Jim Halliday)

"I guess it makes you feel as if he just passed away, instead of all those many years ago," Jim Halliday, Sidney's nephew, told CBC News. "it's a strange feeling. It's one you can't really explain all that well, brought some sense of closure, as they say."

The five identified soldiers fought and died in the Battle of Amiens in 1918, the start of the hundred day offensive that eventually led to the end of the war.

They were members of Canada's 78th Battalion, the Winnipeg Grenadiers.

Sidney Halliday was one of 10 children. In March 1913, he and his brother William left their home in Gloucestershire, England to come to Canada. Sidney soon found work on a farm in Minto, Man., according to William's son, Jim.

That's where he met Lizzie Walmsley. She had come from Winnipeg to work as a mother's helper during the summer. Sidney and Lizzie became sweethearts.

A long lost locket

In 1915 Sidney and his brother William decided to enlist in the Canadian army. William was rejected for health reasons, but Sidney joined the 78th Battalion. After basic training, Sidney was shipped overseas.

That would turn out to be Sidney and Lizzie's final farewell. As a token of their undying love they exchanged lockets, each containing locks of hair.

On arrival in England, the 78th Battalion was stationed at Bramshott, where they underwent more training. When they were sent to France they took part in some of the fiercest battles of the war, including Vimy Ridge and Passchendaele.

In August 1918 the 78th was embroiled in yet another brutal conflict, the Battle of Amiens. It was a turning point that marked the beginning of the end of the war – the final push back against the German Army.

It was a battle of epic proportions. Initially, the Canadian Corps moved forward faster than anyone expected, advancing 13 km. More than 5,000 German troops were captured.

While the 78th was trying to hold the tiny hamlet of Hallu on Aug. 11, the tables were turned. German reinforcements surrounded the Canadians.

Sidney Halliday, 22 years old, was killed in action, one of about 100 members of the 78th who were killed or went missing in the Battle of Amiens.

He fell with his brothers in arms in a field and was buried under the mud in Hallu.

His military records state the body was not recovered for burial.

Identifying the remains

The locket that was key to identifying Halliday's remains had a strand of hair inside and his sweetheart Lizzie Walmsley's name on

The items unearthed, including a little gold locket, were eventually handed over to DND, along with the remains. At first the locket didn't seem relevant to their investigation, but it would prove to be a vital piece in helping identify Sidney Halliday.

When the locket was cleaned it revealed Lizzie Walmsley's name on the lid.

On its own this wasn't helpful, but a further look at the service records showed that at some point one of the missing soldiers from the 78th had asked for a change to his will. Young men at war were pragmatic enough to realize that their chances of survival were limited, so it was standard procedure to write a will.

Those wills became part of the meticulously written war records. Sidney's records indicate that he had left most of his meagre wealth to his mother but at some point had asked for a change to be made. He asked that $10 go to Lizzie Walmsley of Winnipeg.

the lid. (Emmanuel Marchand/CBC)

Walmsley went on to work at Eaton's in Winnipeg. She lived in what is now the St. James suburb, Jim Halliday said.

Thanks to that locket, and the need to make sure he left something behind for Lizzie, Halliday will now have his name placed on a tombstone next year, when he and his comrades receive a full military funeral at the military cemetery near Caix, 28 km southeast of Amiens.

Thursday, Nov. 6 the documentary, Forgotten No More: The Lost Men of the 78th, premieres on CBC TV's Doc Zone. Produced by Lynne Chichakian and directed by Liam O'Rinn, it tells the story of four First World War soldiers and how their remains were identified 100 years after their deaths.

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You'll never believe what a farmer was using this 3,500 year old dagger for

mirror.co.uk

- Nov 25, 2014 17:58

The 27 inch blade has now been bought by Norwich Castle Museum for £38,970 and described as an item of "incredible importance"

SWNS.com

Doorstop: A museum has spent £40,000 to put this Bronze Age ceremonial dagger

A Bronze Age ceremonial dagger used as a DOORSTOP for 12 years has been bought from a farmer by Norwich Castle Museum for £38,970.

The 27 inch blade is thought to be around 3,500 years old and is only the second of its kind found in the UK and the sixth in the whole of Europe.

It was ploughed up in a field in East Rudham, Norfolk in 2002 by a farmer but he was unaware of its "incredible importance".

The family left it unattended in their home in the village for more than a decade and even used it to prop open his office door.

The bronze treasure, known as the Rudham Dirk, even came close to being thrown in a skip before a friend said he should get it checked out by archaeologists.

Its historical significance became clear and it has now been put on display at Norwich Castle Museum.

Historians say similar dirks were found in France and Holland, suggesting people had travelled the channel to share the idea of a ritual dagger.

It was bought from the owner in a private deal for nearly £41,000, including a grant of £39,000 from the National Heritage Memorial Fund.

Dr Tim Pestell, senior curator of archaeology at Norwich Castle, said: "The farmer found it and took it into the house because it would get in the way of his machinery.

"He gave it a cursory brush and left it lying around his office as a doorstop. It is amazing that it has been used as a doorstep but there are an awful lot of similar objects that are found just lying around a house."

Terrifying 1km cable car ride links remote village to outside world

11:30 EST, 10 December 2014 |
11:30 EST, 10 December 2014

dailymail.co.uk

By India Sturgis for MailOnline

It may look like a heart-stopping commute but for villagers living in Yushan in China this cable car is their umbilical chord to the outside world.

The one kilometre line carries supplies and people daily, saving the mountaintop community from making a grueling one day journey down into the valley and then up the other side over a narrow and dangerous pathway.

The cables are strung between two high cliff faces with a steel cage suspended below to carry visitors, locals and tools in and out of the village.

Terrifying: Villagers from mountain top settlement travel along 1km cable car suspended 1,575ft above valley

Cable allows those living in the village of Yushan in Hefeng county in China's Hubei province to go to school

The village is in a staggeringly beautiful location but it gets few visitors as most people do not want to risk the precarious zip line stretching for a dizzying 1,575ft above the valley floor.

People have been living in the village of Yushan in Hefeng county, in China's Hubei province, for hundreds of years, keen to exploit the fertile soil and the safety provided from their mountaintop location.

Risky business: Lubricating the cables once a week is the most dangerous part of the maintenance job

Until recently, villagers rarely needed to access the outside world for anything other than buying tools

Lifeline: Since it has been built it has been operated and maintained by local man Zhang Xinjian, 35

Until recently, inhabitants rarely needed to access the outside world for anything other than buying tools and kept themselves to themselves.

But with the arrival of the modern world, televisions, mobile phones and computers became a prerequisite and people simply wanted to work in jobs outside the village, and that changed.

The cable car itself is homemade and the cable was bought second hand from a European ski resort

While it could have spelled disaster for the remote community, a local, inspired by Alpine cable cars, came up with the idea of building their own.

They bought a second-hand cable from a ski resort in Europe and connected it to a homemade cable car.

The journey takes just a few minutes, as opposed to a day, meaning the children can get to school and adults to work.

Coming in to land: People have been living in the village of Yushan for hundreds of years

Village elder Xiong Sun, 79, said: 'Our lift, of which we are enormously proud and which has been running without problems for almost two decades, means that life can go on as it would in any normal village despite the fact that Yushan is located where normally only eagles would be prepared to make their homes.'

A few people can travel in the cabin at a time and it gives passengers an astonishing view of the mountains

Village elder Xiong Sun, 79, said the community was 'enormously proud' of the transport link

Xiong Sun added that in the two decades the lift has been running there have been no operational problems

Since it was built it has been operated and maintained by local man Zhang Xinjian, 35, who said even when he was sick he was expected to turn up for work because otherwise everybody would be stranded.

He said: 'I started to work at this spot since the rope was set up. No one else would take the job. As my father was the village head he had to assign me to do it and I've been doing it for 15 years.'

Lubricating the cables once a week is the most dangerous part of the job. Zhang has to take the cart and apply oil onto the cables along the way.

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LA CROSSE, Wis. (WKBT) -

Two UW-La Crosse professors will use mathematical models to determine if humanity could survive an attack from the undead.

UW-L Professors Robert Allen and James Peirce will present, “Zombies, Vampires and Math, Oh My” on Thursday, Oct. 30 at 7 p.m. in Cowley Hall 100. The lecture is free and open to the public. No prior math knowledge is required to attend.

UW-L said the presentation will blend horror, humor, math and science.

“We love math, and we think it’s important,” Peirce said. “It’s not just for solving equations for x or balancing checkbooks. It has these wonderful applications, especially for disciplines outside of mathematics.”

Costumes are encouraged and prizes will be awarded for the best costumes.

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"LIVING GOD" ARRESTED ON DRUGS AND FIREARMS CHARGES | WATCHER OF THE DAWN

November 24, 2014Janus

matthewjosephlawrence

Matthew Joseph Lawrence

US coppers appear to have arrested "living god " and opener of hell holes EA Koetting on drugs and weapons charges

Inspector Knacker of the Washington County Drug Task Force stopped a man called Matthew Joseph Lawrence, 33 in the Bloomington area.

He will face five third-degree felony counts for possession of drugs, one third-degree felony count of being restricted possessors of a firearm, and one misdemeanour count each for possession of drugs and drug paraphernalia.

Cops, completely unaware that they were arresting a living God, apparently were acting on a tip from a confidential informant. It looks like the followers of Satan cannot get the reliable evil minions they used to.

After conducting the traffic stop, investigators searched the roommates' residence in the 500 West block of Los Alamitos Drive.

The search uncovered cocaine, methamphetamine, marijuana and other drugs, along with a gun, Whitehead said.

The reason we say that Koetting "appears to have been arrested" is based on the picture, which is a good likeness and the other reason is that a while back his Facebook page featured a comment from someone who claimed that Koetting's real name was Matthew Joseph Lawrence. We were going to follow up on this one, but we were a little slow, because our expert was away in the Far East.

The reason we were interested was that Lawarence had a new job – apparently, he was an Apprentice Carpet cleaner for Atlas Carpet Cleaning Company. There he is known by the name Matt who is guaranteed to get that coffee stain off your rug.

While we respect anyone out there who cleans carpets for a living, it is not a job one expects a Living God to be required to do. Particularly if you are making a hell of a lot tapping your demons for cash. After all water into wine is one thing, getting wine out of the carpet is another.

Given that he was supposed to be the sort of person who could open a hellmouth we are surprised to learn that this particular Prince of Evil is a a positive, hardworking and intelligent young man.

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However, we have to admit that this story has been eclipsed by the drugs and weapons charges. That is a little more rock 'n roll and something you would expect to have on your rap sheet. Well, not really if you truly were an evil god you would expect a few mass murders, and at least a couple of beheadings. Possession charges are not the same as dealing charges, and if you were in the UK you probably would not get sent down for a first offence, The US is a little harder on these but a little software on the firearms offences — after all it is practically compulsory to carry a gun over there.

However, the charges do indicate that far from being a Living God, Koetting's magical street cred, along with his persona is a complete sham. Not only is he *not* a prince of darkness, he is a low level criminal who spends his days crawling on carpets for stains.

There are two ways that Koetting could setting this:

1. He denies that he is not *Lawrence (which we would think was a jolly odd coincidence that a bloke who looks like Koetting should be arrested after being outed as Lawrence the carpet cleaner only a few days before.*

2. The charges are mysteriously dropped and the body of the informant is found eaten by wolves in his own house.

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